

m 3506. cc. 22.

A PRACTICAL
EXPOSITION

OF THE

Church-Catechism :

I N

SEVERAL DISCOURSES

On all the PARTS of it.

By *MATTHEW HOLE*, B. D.

Sometime Fellow of *Exeter College* in *Oxford*,
now Vicar of *Stokegursy* in *Somersetshire*.

*I Cor 14. 12. — Seek that ye may excel to the edifying
of the Church.*

L O N D O N,
Printed for *J. Morpheu* near Stationers Hall.
M. DCC. VIII.



*To the Right Reverend Father in God,
Sir Jonathan Trelawny Bar^t.*

*Lord Bishop of Winchester, and Prelate
of the most Noble Order of the Garter.*

My LORD!

THE ensuing Exercises on the *Church-Catechism* humbly crave your Lordship's Favour and Protection; not that they deserve, but because they need so great a Patronage.

For tho the Catechism of the Church of *England* be justly reputed the best Composure of that kind in the Christian World; yet the Ignorance of some, and the corrupt Designs of others, have unhappily occasion'd too great a neglect and contempt of it: And nothing less than the Countenance and Authority of the Fathers, as well as the Diligence and Application of the Sons of the Church, are sufficient to recover its antient Honor and Use.

'Tis this has embolden'd me once more to prefix to the following Discourses so Great and Honorable a Name, which is able at once to adorn the Work, and protect its Author.

The Dedication.

And this I have the rather done, to recommend them to the World with greater Advantage, and the better to promote the great End and Design of them; which your Lordship's known Zeal, and firm adherence to the Church, may give abundant Encouragement to expect.

This known Zeal is too warm and well-grounded to degenerate into Lukewarmness and Neutrality: And tho Envy and Malice may raise a Mist before the clearest Integrity, yet like the Sun it will soon get out of the Cloud, and after shine the brighter.

My Lord! This second Edition comes to congratulate your Lordship's happy Translation to a higher Dignity, which may serve to banish all fears of the Church's Danger, and to give us well-grounded Hopes of its safe and flourishing Condition.

May your Lordship long continue to adorn your High and Honorable Station, and support the inferior Order committed to your Care and Charge; that your Miter here on Earth, may be at last exchanged for a Crown of Glory in Heaven, is the hearty Wish and Prayer of,

My Lord!

Your Lordship's most humble

and devoted Servant,

MATTHEW HOLE.

THE PREFACE.

READER,

THOU art here presented with an Abridgment of some Catechetical Exercises, deliver'd in a Country Congregation; and therefore suited to the Capacity of the meanest Understandings. Some that have been either pleas'd with, or profited by them, would fain persuade themselves, that others might receive the same Benefit and Satisfaction, if they were made more publick. This hath dispos'd the Author, who is unwilling to decline any thing for the Service of his Church and Country, to venture them abroad and try the Experiment: If they shall be found any wise useful, either to the informing the Judgment, or exciting the Affections, or helping any forward in their Christian Course, he has all that he aims at, and will rest abundantly satisfy'd in the Success of his Adventure. And accordingly the First Part being found, in the Judgment of the World, useful and serviceable to those Ends, I have now gone forward to all the other Parts of the Catechism in the same Method: And being now compleat, I humbly submit all to the Wisdom and Authority of my Superiors, and to the candid and favourable Construction of all judicious and impartial Readers.

What doleful Evils have proceeded from the lack of Catechizing, our present Age is an unhappy Instance; in which many being bred up in the Times of the Civil War, and more in the
Confu-

THE PREFACE.

Confusions that have thereby happen'd since, have, thro the sad Neglect of this great Duty, been depriv'd of the Benefit of early and well-grounded Instructions; and thereby lost those Principles of Religion and Vertue, which, if imbib'd sooner, might have continued longer with them, and made them more steady in their Duty both to God and Man.

'Tis much to be feared, that the many dismal Evils that have ensued from this Neglect, are hardly to be cur'd in the present Age; which, for want of being well-principled in the beginning, is to much over-run with Atheism, and all manner of Impiety.

All our Hopes must be in the next Generation, by well-training up those that are to live to it: that is, by laying a good Foundation in the Minds of Children and Youth, and seasoning their tender Years with more lasting Principles of Religion and Vertue.

Long accusom'd and habituated Sinners, like over-grown Oaks, are sturdy and inflexible: Whereas Children and Youth, like tender Twigs, are more pliable, may be bent any way, and are capable of any Impressions. This should teach all Parents, as they tender the Welfare of their Children, above all things, to take care of their timely and pious Education.

Masters likewise, Tutors, Guardians, and all others that have the oversight of Youth, should build upon this Foundation; using their best Endeavours to plant in them the Principles of Religion, and to sow the Seeds of Vertue betimes in their Hearts, that they may the better grow up to the Service of God and their Country.

Moreover, all faithful Pastors are not only to regard their whole Flock, but more especially to feed the Lambs, which Christ, the Great Shepherd of the Sheep, hath made the greatest Mark of their Love, both to him and them: and therefore the Apostle wills them, as to have strong Meats for well-grown Christians; so to provide Milk for Babes, even the sincere Milk of the Word, that they may grow thereby.

But

THE PREFACE.

But above all, it should be the Care and Wisdom of Superiors, so to settle and regulate inferior Schools, that Children may not be poison'd by bad Principles; an Error in the first Education, as in the first Concoction, being very difficult to be cur'd or remov'd after.

In a word, nothing tends more to the Peace and Prosperity of a Kingdom, than the well-training up the Members of it; and instilling good Principles betimes into those, upon whom the Welfare and Happiness of it must depend.

This is the way to put a stop to the Overflowings of Ungodliness, and to prevent that Deluge of Impiety that else must unavoidably break in upon us.

In short, this may help to retrieve the Antient Piety and Simplicity of our Forefathers; and to mend that in the next Age, which is amiss in this: Which is the hearty Desire and Prayer of a

True Well-wisher to his Church and Country.

The

The CONTENTS.

The First Part.

THE Introduction, shewing the Nature and Necessity of Catechizing in general; together with the Excellence of the Church-Catechism in particular. Page 1.

DISCOURSE I.

Of the Benefit and Usefulness of Catechizing, from Prov. 22. 6. Train up a Child in the way that he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it. P. 7.

DISC. II.

In the first Question and Answer of the Catechism, two things explain'd; First, the Occasion and Original of the Christian Name, from Acts 11. 26. The Disciples were call'd Christians first at Antioch. 13.

DISC. III.

Of the Obligation of the Christian Name, from 2 Tim. 2. 19. Let every one that nameth the Name of Christ depart from Iniquity. 19.

DISC. IV.

In the second Question and Answer of the Catechism, three things explain'd; First, the Parties that give the Christian Name: where, of the Reason and Use of Godfathers and Godmothers, from Luke 1. 59. It came to pass on the eighth day, they came to circumcise the Child, and called him Zacharias, after the Name of his Father. 25.

DISC. V.

Of the Duty of Godfathers and Godmothers, together with the Qualifications of such as are to be made choice of for that Office, from the same Words. 32.

DISC. VI.

Secondly, of the time of giving the Christian Name, which was at Circumcision under the Old Testament, and in our Baptism under the New, from the same words. 38.

DISC. VII.

Thirdly, the three great Benefits and Privileges bestow'd on God's part in

The Contents,

in our Baptism; wherein, first, we are made the Members of Christ; from Eph. 5. 20. We are Members of his Body. 44.

DISC. VIII.

Of the second great Privilege of Baptism, wherein we are made the Children of God, from Rom. 8. 14. As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the Sons of God. And Verse the 16th, The Spirit witnesseth with our Spirit, that we are the Children of God. 50.

DISC. IX.

Of the third great Privilege of Baptism, wherein we are made Heirs, or Inheritors of the Kingdom of Heaven, from Rom. 8. 17. If Children, then Heirs; Heirs of God, and Joint-heirs with Christ. 57.

DISC. X.

In the third Question and Answer of the Catechism are explain'd the three great Duties or Conditions requir'd and promis'd on our part, to entitle us to the three foremention'd Privileges: The first whereof is, the renouncing the three great Enemies of Christ and our own Salvation, the Devil, the World, and the Flesh. Renouncing the Power and Temptations of the Devil, explain'd from Jam. 4. 7. Resist the Devil, and he will flee from you. 64.

DISC. XI.

Of renouncing the Works of the Devil, from 1 John 3. 8. For this purpose was the Son of God manifested, to destroy the Works of the Devil. 71.

DISC. XII.

Of renouncing the second-ghostly Enemy, the Poms and Vanities of this wicked World, from 1 John 2. 15. Love not the World, nor the Things of the World; if any Man love the World, the Love of the Father is not in him. 79.

DISC. XIII.

Of renouncing the third ghostly Enemy, viz. all the sinful Lusts of the Flesh, from 1 Pet. 2. 11. Dearly beloved, I beseech you as Strangers and Pilgrims, abstain from fleshly Lusts, which war against the Soul. 86.

DISC. XIV.

Of the second great Duty and Condition requir'd and promis'd in our Baptism, viz. to believe all the Articles of our Christian Faith, from Mark 1. 15. Repent, and believe the Gospel. 93.

DISC. XV.

Of the third great Duty and Condition requir'd and engag'd in our Baptism,

The Contents.

tism, viz. to keep God's holy Will and Commandments, and walk in the same all the Days of our Lives, from Mat. 19. 17. If thou wilt enter into Life, keep the Commandments. 100.

DISC. XVI.

In the fourth Question and Answer of the Catechism, three things explain'd: First, the solemn Recognition or owning the Baptismal Vow made by Children in their riper years; together with their Promise and Resolution of performing it, in those words, Yes verily, and by God's help so I will: From Psal. 66. 13. I will pay thee my Vows. 107.

DISC. XVII.

Of the grateful Acknowledgment made by them, of the great Mercies and Privileges of Baptism, in these words, I heartily thank our Heavenly Father, who hath call'd me to this State of Salvation, from Rom. 7. 25. I thank God, thro Jesus Christ our Lord. 115.

DISC. XVIII.

Lastly, To all this is added, hearty Prayer unto God, for Grace to be enabled to persevere and continue in this State to our Lives end, from Psal. 5. 2. Unto thee will I pray. 122.

The Second Part, containing the Apostles Creed, the Ten Commandments, and the Lord's Prayer.

The Apostles Creed.

DISC. I.

ON 2 Tim. 1. 13. Hold fast the Form of sound Words, which thou hast heard of me, in Faith and Love, which is in Christ Jesus. 133.

DISC. II.

On Mark 9. 24. Lord, I believe, help my Unbelief.

DISC. III.

Heb. 11. 6. He that cometh unto God must believe that he is, &c. 146.

DISC. IV.

1 Cor. 8. 6. To us there is one God, the Father. 153.

DISC. V.

Rev. 1. 8. The Almighty. 160.

DISC.

The Contents.

DISC. VI.

Gen. 1. 1. In the Beginning God created the Heaven and the Earth. 166.

DISC. VII.

Mat. 1. 21. Thou shalt call his Name Jesus, for he shall save his People from their Sins. 172.

DISC. VIII.

John 1. 41. We have found the Messias, which is Christ. 178.

DISC. IX.

John 1. 14. We beheld his Glory, the Glory as of the only begotten of the Father. 185.

DISC. X.

2 Tim. 1. 2. And Christ Jesus our Lord. 191.

DISC. XI.

Mat. 1. 20. That which is conceiv'd in her, is of the Holy Ghost. 197.

DISC. XII.

Luke 2. 6, 7. While they were there, the Days were accomplish'd that she should be deliver'd; and she brought forth her First-born Son, &c. 204.

DISC. XIII.

1 Pet. 3. 18. For Christ also once suffer'd for Sins, the Just for the Unjust, that he might bring us unto God. 210.

DISC. XIV.

Mark 15. 15. So Pilate willing to content the People, released Barrabbas to them; and deliver'd Jesus, when he had scourged him, to be crucify'd. 217.

DISC. XV.

1 Cor. 15. 3. Christ died for our Sins according to the Scriptures. 224.

DISC. XVI.

John 19. 40. Then took they the Body of Jesus, and wound it in Linen Clothes, with the Spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury. 231.

DISC. XVII.

Acts 2. 27. Thou wilt not leave my Soul in Hell. 238.

DISC. XVIII.

1 Cor. 15. 4. That he rose again the third Day, according to the Scriptures. 244.

DISC. XIX.

Ephes. 4. 10. He that descended is the same also that ascended up far

The Contents.

far above all Heavens, that he might fill all things.	253.
DISC. XX.	
<i>Mark</i> 16. 19. And sat on the right Hand of God.	260.
DISC. XXI.	
<i>2 Tim.</i> 4. 1. The Lord Jesus Christ shall judg the Quick and the Dead, at his Appearing, and his Kingdom.	267.
DISC. XXII.	
<i>Acts</i> 2. 4. And they were all fill'd with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other Tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.	274.
DISC. XXIII.	
<i>Eph.</i> 4. 4. There is one Body, and one Spirit, &c.	282.
DISC. XXIV.	
<i>Acts</i> 2. 42. They continued stedfastly in the Apostles Doctrine and Fellowship, and breaking of Bread, and in Prayers.	290.
DISC. XXV.	
<i>Acts</i> 5. 31. Him hath God exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give Repentance unto <i>Israel</i> , and Forgiveness of Sins.	297.
DISC. XXVI.	
<i>Acts</i> 26. 8. Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the Dead?	305.
DISC. XXVII.	
<i>Mat.</i> 25. 46. And these shall go away into everlasting Punishment, but the righteous into Life Eternal.	312.
DISC. XXVIII.	
<i>Heb.</i> 1. 2. By whom also he made the Worlds.	318.
DISC. XXIX.	
<i>Titus</i> 2. 14. Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all Iniquity, and purify to himself a peculiar People, zealous of good Works.	325.
DISC. XXX.	
<i>Rom.</i> 15. 16. Being sanctify'd by the Holy Ghost.	333.

The Ten Commandments.

DISC. I.	
<i>Mat.</i> 5. 17. Think not that I am come to destroy the Law and the Prophets; I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.	345.
DISC. II.	
<i>Psal.</i> 119. 96. I have seen an end of all Perfection; but thy Commandment is exceeding broad.	352.
DISC.	

The Contents

DISC. III.

Exod. 20. 1, 2. And God spake all these Words, saying, I am the Lord thy God, that brought thee out of the Land of Egypt, out of the House of Bondage. 358.

DISC. IV, V.

Exod. 20. 3. Thou shalt have no other Gods before me. 365. 372.

DISC. VI, VII.

Exod. 20. 4, 5, 6. Thou shalt not make unto thy self any graven Image, nor the likeness of any thing that is in Heaven above, or in the Earth beneath, or in the Water under the Earth: Thou shalt not bow down to them, or worship them; for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the Iniquity of the Fathers upon the Children, to the third and fourth Generation of them that hate me, and shewing Mercy to thousands, in them that love me and keep my Commandments. 378. 385.

DISC. VIII, IX.

Exod. 20. 7. Thou shalt not take the Name of the Lord thy God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his Name in vain. 392. 399.

DISC. X, XI.

Exod. 20. 8, 9, 10, 11. Remember the Sabbath-day to keep it Holy: Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy Work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God: In it thou shalt do no manner of Work, thou, nor thy Son, nor thy Daughter, thy Man-servant, nor thy Maid-servant, nor thy Cattel, nor the Stranger that is within thy Gates; for in six days the Lord made Heaven and Earth, the Sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the seventh Day, and hallowed it. 405. 412.

DISC. XII, XIII.

Exod. 20. 12. Honor thy Father and thy Mother, that thy days may be long upon the Land which the Lord thy God giveth thee. 418. 426.

DISC. XIV, XV.

Exod. 20. 13. Thou shalt not kill. 431. 438.

DISC. XVI, XVII.

Exod. 20. 14. Thou shalt not commit Adultery. 444. 451.

DISC. XVIII, XIX.

Exod. 20. 15. Thou shalt not steal. 457. 464.

DISC. XX, XXI.

Exod. 20. 16. Thou shalt not bear false Witness against thy Neigh- 470. 477.

DISC.

The Contents.

DISC. XXII, XXIII.

Exod. 20. 17. Thou shalt not covet thy Neighbour's House, thou shalt not covet thy Neighbour's Wife, nor his Man-servant, nor his Maid-servant, nor his Ox, nor his Ass, nor any thing that is thy Neighbour's. 483. 489.

DISC. XXIV.

Eccles. 12. 13. Let us hear the Conclusion of the whole matter, Fear God, and keep his Commandments, for this is the whole Duty of Man. 495.

DISC. XXV.

Mat. 22. 37, 38. Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy Heart, and with all thy Soul, and with all thy Mind. This is the first and great Commandment. 502.

DISC. XXVI.

Mat. 22. 39, 40. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy Neighbour as thy self: On these two Commandments hang all the Law, and the Prophets. 509.

The Lord's Prayer.

DISC. I.

Of our utter Inability of our selves to do or pray as we ought, from 2 Cor. 3. 5. Not that we are sufficient of our selves to think any thing as of our selves, but our Sufficiency is of God. 521.

DISC. II.

Of the Necessity and Sufficiency of God's Grace to enable us to the Performance of both, from the same words. 527.

DISC. III.

Of the proper Way and Means of obtaining this Grace, from Mat. 7. 7. Ask, and it shall be given; Seek, and ye shall find; Knock, and it shall be open'd unto you. 533.

DISC. IV.

Of the Lord's Prayer, the Preface, Preliminaries, and Parts of it, from Luke 11. 2. And he said unto them, When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in Heaven, &c. 540.

DISC. V.

Of the first Petition, from Luke 11. 2. Hallow'd be thy Name. 546.

DISC. VI.

Of the second Petition, from Luke 11. 2. Thy Kingdom come. 552.

DISC. VII.

Of the third Petition, from Luke 11. 2. Thy Will be done, as in Heaven,

The Contents.

Heaven, so in Earth.	558.
DISC. VIII.	
<i>Of the fourth Petition, from Luke 11. 3. Give us day by day our daily Bread.</i>	564.
DISC. IX.	
<i>Of the fifth Petition, from Luke 11. 4. And forgive us our Sins, for we also forgive them that are indebted to us.</i>	571.
DISC. X.	
<i>Of the sixth Petition, from Luke 11. 4. And lead us not into Temptation, but deliver us from Evil.</i>	577.
DISC. XI.	
<i>Of the Conclusion of the Lord's Prayer, from Mat. 6. 13. For thine is the Kingdom, and the Power, and the Glory, for ever and ever. Amen.</i>	584.
DISC. XII.	
<i>Phil. 4. 6. In every thing by Prayer and Supplication, with Thanksgiving, let your Requests be made known unto God.</i>	591.

The Third Part.

DISC. I.	
O <i>F the Number of the Sacraments, from 1 John 5. 6. This is he that came by Water and Blood, even Jesus Christ; not by Water only, but by Water and Blood: And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is Truth.</i>	601.
DISC. II.	
<i>Of the Necessity of the Sacraments, and first of Baptism, from John 3. 5. Jesus answer'd, Verily, Verily, I say unto thee, Except a Man be born again of Water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God.</i>	607.
DISC. III.	
<i>Of the Necessity of the Lord's Supper, from John 6. 53. Jesus said unto them, Verily, Verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the Flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his Blood, there is no Life in you.</i>	614.
DISC. IV.	
<i>Of the Nature of a Sacrament, from Mat. 28. 19. Go ye therefore; and teach all Nations, &c.</i>	619.

DISC.

The Contents.

DISC. V.

Of the Parts of a Sacrament, or the outward Sign of Baptism, from the same words. 625.

DISC. VI.

Of the inward Sign or Grace of Baptism, from Rom. 6. 4. Therefore we are bury'd with him by Baptism into Death, that like as Christ was rais'd from the dead by the Glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in Newness of Life. 631

DISC. VII.

Of the Conditions requir'd to Baptism, from Acts 2. 38. Then Peter said unto them, Repent and be baptiz'd every one of you in the Name of Jesus Christ, for the Remission of Sins. Together with Acts 8. 37. And Philip said, If thou believest with all thy heart, thou mayst be baptiz'd. 637.

DISC. VIII.

Of the Persons to be admitted to Baptism, from Acts 16. 33. And was baptiz'd, he and all his, straitway. 644.

DISC. IX.

Of the Sureties Engagement in Baptism, from Mark 16. 16. He that believeth and is baptiz'd, shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be damned. 650.

DISC. X.

Of the End of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, from 1 Cor. 11. 24. This do in remembrance of me. 656.

DISC. XI.

Of the outward visible Sign of that Sacrament, from Mat. 26. 27, 28. Jesus took Bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to his Disciples, saying, Take, eat, this is my Body: And he took the Cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it, for this is my Blood. 662.

DISC. XII.

Of the inward Part or Thing signify'd, from Luke 22. 19, 20. This is my Body which is given for you; This Cup is the New Testament in my Blood, which is shed for you. 669.

DISC. XIII.

Of the Benefit of that Holy Sacrament, from Phil. 4. 13. I can do all things thro Christ that strengthneth me. 674.

DISC. XIV.

Of the Requisites to the worthy receiving it, from 1 Cor. 11. 28. Let a Man examine himself, and so let him eat of that Bread, and drink of that Cup. 680.

A
PRACTICAL EXPOSITION
OF THE
FIRST PART
OF THE

Church-Catechism:

CONTAINING

The Preliminary Questions,

AND

The Baptismal Covenant.

1 Cor. 14. 12. Seek that ye may excel to the Edifying of the Church.



Printed in the Year 1707.

PRACICAL EXPOSITION

OF THE

FIRST PART

OF THE

Church Discipline

CONTAINING

The Preliminary Questions

AND

The Baptismal Covenant

1 Cor. 14. 1-17. And that he may excel to the Edifi-
cation of the Church



Printed in the Year 1707.

ADVERTISEMENT.

AN Apology for the Bath. Being an Answer to a late Enquiry into the Right Use and Abuses of the Baths in England, so far as may concern the Hot Waters of the Bath in the County of Somerset. With some Reflections on Fresh Cold-Bathing, Bathing in Sea-Water, and Dipping in Baptism. In a Letter to a Friend. By *Tho. Guidott*, M. D. Author of the Latin Tract, *De Thermis Britannicis*.

Just publish'd, The Second Volume of the *Phoenix*, or a Revival of scarce and valuable Pieces, no where to be found but in the Closets of the Curious. With a Preface giving some account of the Pieces in this Volume, viz. Dr. *Colet's* Sermon for Reformation, with his Life written by *Erasmus*. Some Account of the Lady *Jane Gray*, with Four Papers under her own Hand. The History of the Troubles at *Frankfort*. *Calvin's* Common-Prayer Book, or the Service us'd by the *English* at *Geneva*. The Burden of *Issachar*, or the Tyrannical Power of the Kirk in *Scotland*. Two Tracts suppos'd to be written by *Mr. Hales* of *Eaton*, viz. *Brevis Disquisitio*, or a better way to refute Papists; and *Dissertatio de Pace*, a Discourse of the Peace of the Church. *Manasseh Ben Israel's* Defence of the Jews. *Richardson's* Hell Torments. *Jones's* 2 Sermons on the Resurrection. An Account of a new Sect of Latitude Men at *Cambridg*. Duke of *Buckingham* of Religion, and *Clifford* of Human Reason. Both sold by *J. Morphew* near Stationer's Hall; where may be had the First Volume, containing an Account of *Origen* and his Opinions. The Declaration of *Will. I. P.* of *Orange*. *John Keymor's* Observations on the Dutch Fishing. *Hampton-Court* Conference. *K. Charles's II's* Coronation Sermon at *Scom*, and the manner of his taking the Covenant. States General's Answer to the *English* Declaration of War in 73. Trial of *Pen* and *Mead* at the *Old-Baily*, &c.

Books sold by J. Darby in Bartholomew-Close.

ADvices from *Parnassus*, in two Centuries; with the Political Touchstone, and an Appendix to it. By *Trajano Boccalini*. To which is added, a Continuation of the Advices, by *Girolamo Briani* of *Modena*. All translated from the *Italian* by several Hands. Revis'd and corrected by Mr. *John Hughes*.

The same, large Paper.

Goodwin's History of the Reign of *K. Henry V.* in 9 Books.

The *Oceana* of *James Harrington*, and his other Works. With his Life prefix'd.

The same, large Paper.

Col. Sidney's Discourses of Government, 2d Edit. with his Effigies, &c.

The same, large Paper.

A Collection of State Tracts publish'd on occasion of the late Revolution, and during the Reign of King *William III.* in 3 Vol.

A

Books sold by J. Darby in Bartholomew-Close.

A Confutation of the Reason and Philosophy of Atheism; being in a great measure either an Abridgment or an Improvement of what Dr. Cudworth offer'd to that purpose in his True Intellectual System of the Universe. With an Introduction, containing an impartial Examination of what that Learned Person advanc'd concerning the Doctrine of a Trinity in Unity, and the Resurrection of the Body. In 2 Vol. 40.

The Truth of the Christian Religion, written in *Italian* by the Marquis of Pianezza, and translated into *English*. With some Account of the Author.

Achitophel, or the true Picture of a wicked Politician; written about 80 Years since by Dr. Nath. Carpenter, Chaplain to ABp *Usher*; now improv'd, and the Stile adapted to the present Age. The last 3 by *Tho. Wise*, B.D. Fellow of *Exeter College in Oxford*.

Biographia Ecclesiastica, or the Lives of the most eminent Fathers of the Christian Church who flourish'd during the four first Centurys, and part of the fifth. Adorn'd with all their Effigies. To which is added, a Discourse concerning the State of Religion during those Ages. In 2 Vol.

Sermons preach'd upon several Occasions, by *Benj. Calamy* D.D. Chaplain in ordinary to his Majesty: With Dr. *Sherlock's* Sermon at his Funeral. The 4th Edit.

Free Thoughts concerning a Future State, as discoverable by Natural Reason, and Script of all superstitious Appendages. With some Remarks on the *Inquiry concerning Virtue*. By Mr. *Henry Day*.

Limborch's System of Divinity, translated from the Latin, 2 Vol.

Nye's 4 Letters to a Peer concerning the Trinity, &c.

—Institutions concerning the Trinity, and the manner of Christ's Divinity.

—Defence of the Canon of the New Testament, in answer to Mr. *Toland's* Amyntor.

—System of Grace and Freewill.

The Introduction.

BEFORE I enter upon the Explication of our Church-Catechism, which is a brief, but withal a compleat and comprehensive Abridgment of the Christian Religion; 'twill be requisite to premise something touching the Nature, Necessity and Usefulness of Catechizing. And here, the better to clear our way, I shall begin with the word Catechism, or Catechizing; which coming from the Greek word *κατηχησμαι*, that signifies to Reflect, or return a Sound, denotes a way of Instruction by Question and Answer, where the Learner doth, as it were, echo back, and return the Sound and Sense of the Teacher.

But to go on from the Name to the Thing. Catechism, or Catechizing, may be defined to be a *general Instruction in the fundamental Principles of the Christian Religion, by way of Question and Answer*. I stile it a *general Instruction*, to distinguish it from that other way of Teaching, known by the name of *Preaching*; which descends to the more particular Parts and Duties of Religion. By the *fundamental Principles of Christian Religion*, I understand the great and necessary Points both of Faith and Practice; which the Catechism is design'd to instruct Children in, in order to the *building them up in their most Holy Faith, and making them Wise unto Salvation*. So that Catechizing lays the Foundation of Faith and Knowledg; whereas Preaching raises the Superstructure, and buildeth thereupon: the one sows the Seeds of Grace in the Heart; the other helps it to grow up into a holy Life, and leads on to greater Maturity and Perfection. Lastly, I stile it a way of Instruction by *Question and Answer*, whereby 'tis farther distinguish'd from *Preaching*; which is a continued Discourse made by the Teacher, without any Reply or Repetition of the Hearer: Whereas here the Catechist instructs by asking of Questions, and the Catechumen learns by returning of Answers. By both which, Knowledg is more easily instill'd, and likewise makes the deeper and more lasting Impressions on the Mind.

From this brief description of the Nature, I proceed to
The Necessity of Catechizing; which is indeed requisite to all
the Ends of Religion. And here it may not be amiss to ob-
serve,

That in the beginning of Christianity, our blessed Saviour and
his Apostles having to do with grown Persons, both Jews and
Gentiles, this way of Catechizing went before Baptism, and was
a necessary Preparative thereunto: For the Jews being to be con-
verted from Judaism, and the Gentiles from Heathenism to Chri-
stianity; 'twas necessary they should unlearn the Rites and Idola-
tries of the former, before they could receive the Rules, or be ini-
tiated into the Mysteries of the latter. And therefore we find,
that the Apostles Commission was to *Go and Teach all Nations,*
before *they baptized them*, Mat. 28. 19, 20. That is, being sent to
convert rude and barbarous People, that were Aliens to the
Commonwealth of *Israel*, and *Strangers to the Covenant of Pro-*
mise, without God, and without Christ in the World, they were first
to instruct them in the knowledg of God, and to believe in Christ,
before they were to be receiv'd into his Church, or admitted
to the Benefits and Privileges of it.

But when these had embraced Christianity, and were baptized,
the Promise being to them and their Children, who became Holy,
and were in Covenant by the Faith of their Parents, their Chil-
dren were received to Baptism, and have been admitted into the
Church ever since. Now here Instruction follows Baptism, these
being to be taught afterward the Doctrine of the Christian Reli-
gion, into which they have the favour to be initiated, before they
were of Age to understand it. However, we may note,

Secondly, That tho Catechizing sometimes follows Baptism,
yet it must always go before *Confirmation*, and is a necessary Pre-
parative to it. Here, by Confirmation, we understand that so-
lemn renewing and ratifying the Baptismal Vow in our own Per-
sons, when we come to Years of Discretion, that was made in
our behalf by Sureties in our Infancy: Which Act is accompa-
nied with the laying on of Hands, the Blessing and Prayers of
the Bishop for Grace to enable us thereunto. This is that laying
on of Hands mentioned by the Apostle, *Heb. 6. 1, 2.* which is
peculiar to Confirmation: For tho this Ceremony was used on
other Occasions, as particularly in the Ordination of Ministers,
yet in the forecited place, being mentioned immediately after
Baptism, and numbred among those first Doctrines of Christia-
nity,

The Introduction.

nity, that belong to all Christians instructed in it, can be meant only of the Use of it in Confirmation; and hath been so understood and practised in all Ages of the Christian Church.

Now Catechizing is absolutely necessary to instruct us in the knowledge of what was undertaken for us in our Baptism, without which we must be utterly incapable of knowing or receiving any benefit by Confirmation. Again,

Thirdly, Catechizing is necessary to fit and prepare Christians for the worthy receiving of the Holy Sacrament, for that instructs them in the Nature and End of that great Ordinance, together with the Qualifications requisite to the due participation of it: So that the omitting or slighting of these Instructions, are the true Reasons why some receive this Holy Sacrament unworthily, and many others receive it not at all. Moreover,

Fourthly, Catechizing is necessary to a future Proficiency by preaching the Word, and all other religious Exercises: for as there is no Building without a Foundation, so neither is there any edifying, or going on to perfection, without laying the Ground-work by Catechizing. We may observe some very zealous indeed for Preaching, and calling loudly for Lectures and Sermons; who yet for lack of Catechizing, *are ever learning, but never come to the knowledge of the Truth*: and notwithstanding all their goodly Pretences to Light and Knowledge, stand in need to be taught what are the first Principles of the Oracles of God. Hence it comes to pass, that so many unhappily mistake the true Means of Edification, and prefer the vain Dreams and Delusions of Mens Fancies, before wise, wholesom, and pious Instructions. Wherefore,

Fifthly, Catechizing is necessary to preserve Men from Errors, Heresies and Divisions in Matters of Religion: These are those Tares that are too apt to spring up in the Field of the Church, and to choke the good Seed of sound Doctrine planted in it; which are therefore to be weeded out, and prevented by this timely method of Instruction. We read in Scripture of false Teachers, that should come in Christ's Name and deceive many; and likewise of the cunning craftiness of Seducers, who would *come with all deceivableness of Unrighteousness*, 2 Thess. 2. 10. Now there is no such Antidote against the Poison of their false Doctrines, as to be instructed and settled betimes in the Principles of Religion; for they are the ignorant and uncatechiz'd Persons that are drawn aside by these Seducers, and like Children tossed to and fro with every Wind of Doctrine. Early Instruction is the best

The Introduction.

Ballast to preserve Men from these Blasts, and to keep them sound and steady in the true Religion; and therefore the Apostle directs, not only to learn, but *to hold fast the form of sound Words*: Which tho it may be understood at large of the whole Body of the Scriptures, yet because the great and weighty Truths of Religion lie there scattered and diffused up and down, and are not easily discerned or distinguished by ordinary Capacities; therefore this *form of sound Words* is generally interpreted of the *Apostles Creed*, which being a brief Summary of all the necessary Articles of Faith, is thereby made the Test or Touchstone of sound Doctrine; by learning and understanding whereof, Men may be able to try and discern between true and false Doctrine, and thereby defeat the Designs of false Teachers, by receiving the one and rejecting the other.

Lastly, Catechizing is necessary to preserve Men from Temptations to Sin, and falling into a vicious and ungodly course of Life. As there are false Teachers that endeavour to corrupt the Doctrine of Christ, and to draw Men into Errors and Divisions to destroy the Unity of his Church; so there are other evil Instruments, that seek to corrupt mens Manners, and to draw them into a loose, intemperate and debauched Life. Now as Catechizing is known to be the best Preservative against the former; so is the well-grounding of Youth in the Principles of Religion the best Means to prevent the latter: For when the Mind is, by early and pious Instruction, possessed of good Principles, 'tis in a great measure armed against the force of Temptation; Virtue will then keep the Possession, and Vice must come with great strength to assault or overcome it: Whereas an uninstructed Person lies open and defenceless, ready to yield upon the first Motion, and to surrender upon every Temptation.

Thus we see what Catechizing is, namely, *a general Instruction in the fundamental Principles of the Christian Religion, by way of Question and Answer*: And likewise how necessary it is to all the Ends of Religion. To effect which, a Catechism must have these three Properties; it must be Short, Plain, and Comprehensive.

I. I say, a Catechism must be Short, that it may be the better learn'd, and the more easily committed to memory; for this way of instructing being intended for Children, it must be as brief and concise as possible, lest Length and Tedioufness should discourage them from learning, and render it too difficult to be retained:

*

And

The Introduction.

And therefore a Catechism ought not to be crouded with any unnecessary matters of Controversy ; but to consist only of the fundamental Points of Faith, and Principles of a Holy Life.

II. A Catechism must be Plain and Familiar, that it may be the better suited to the Capacities of the Learners, and the more easily understood by them ; and therefore it must not consist of any nice and abstruse Speculations, that are more apt to puzzle and distract, than inform the Mind.

III. A Catechism must be Full and Comprehensive, containing the Whole of a Christian's Duty, and all matters necessary to Salvation ; it must comprize all that is to be believed, practised and prayed for, that the Learner may be perfect in all sound Knowledge, and *thorowly instructed to every good Work.*

These were the Qualifications of the antient Catechisms, which were such Forms of Doctrine or sound Words, as might be easily learned and retained by all, containing nothing but what was purely Fundamental to a good Life here, and all that was necessary to Eternal Happiness hereafter. Such as this is the Catechism of our Church, which I am about to explain to you ; in which the three forecited Properties may be clearly seen. For,

1st. 'Tis a Brief and Concise Model of Instruction, and so not apt to clog or burden the Memory of the Learner.

2^{dly}. 'Tis Plain and Familiar, fitted to the weakest Capacities, and so may easily be received and remembred by all, even the meanest Understandings.

3^{dly}. 'Tis Full and Comprehensive, containing all the necessary Dutys of a Christian, as well as all the fundamental Doctrines of Christianity ; so that as there is nothing Redundant in it that may be spared, so there is nothing Defective that need be supplied : And consequently for its Excellency and Use far exceeds all the Catechisms, not only of the Roman Church, but likewise those of our Modern Reformers ; both which are not only burdensom and difficult for their length, but by crouding into them many obscure and unnecessary Tenets, are redundant for their Matter.

In short then, this may serve to recommend this excellent Summary or Abridgment of the Christian Religion, to be taught and learned of all that would go on to Perfection. For as in all Arts and Sciences we must begin with Principles, before we can attain to a higher Perfection ; so in learning the Christian Religion, we must begin first with the Principles of the Doctrine
of

of Christ, if we mean to arrive to any higher Degrees of Knowledge of it. This was the Method the Apostles us'd in teaching, and the Disciples took in learning the Mysteries of the Gospel: And all that would be knowing and stable Christians, must go on by the same Steps.

'Tis indeed a great piece of the Care, Wisdom and Piety of our Church, to provide such a useful and compendious Model of Instruction, which it requires to be taught and learned of all its Members: There are none, of what Age, Parts, or Quality soever, but stand in need of, and may receive benefit by these Instructions; the greatest Persons may not be asham'd, nor the meanest afraid, to learn them; but as they are useful and necessary for all, so they ought not to be despised or neglected by any.

Wherefore, let all who have the Care or Oversight of any others, see that the Persons committed to their Charge be well catechized, and instructed in the Principles of Religion; and to that end, let them (as they are commanded) keep to that Catechism, or excellent Method of Instruction, which the Church hath wisely chalked out for them, that all its Members may be bred up in the Belief and Practice of the same Doctrine, and not be distracted with various Notions, nor divided into sundry and different Sects and Opinions, to the great disturbance of the Peace of the Church, and the greater peril of their own Souls.

(7)

A Practical Exposition of the First Part of the Church-Catechism.

DISCOURSE I.

*Prov. 22. 6. Train up a Child in the Way he should go,
and when he is old he will not depart from it.*

HAVING premis'd some things in the foregoing Introduction, touching the Nature and Necessity of Catechizing in general, and likewise of the Excellency of our Church-Catechism in particular; I proceed to add something farther concerning the Benefit and Usefulness of Catechizing, the better to quicken and excite to so important and necessary a Duty. This I shall do from the Words read, *Train up a Child, &c.*

They are the Words of *Solomon*, who being in all Ages reputed the wisest of Men, his Advice must carry great Weight with it; and being the Result of great Wisdom and large Experience, may very well deserve to be heeded, and receiv'd by all Men. And here we learn,

First, That there is a Way wherein all Men should go.

Secondly, That Children are to be train'd up betimes in this Way.

Thirdly, We have an Encouragement annex'd to so doing, *viz. When they are old they will not depart from it.*

I. The wise Man here plainly supposes, That there is a Way wherein all Men ought to go; and this is double, the

One is, The way of a particular Calling, Trade, or Course of Life, wherein they are to employ themselves for their bodily Sustainance. The

Other.

Other is, The way of a general Calling, Profession, or Course of Religion, wherein they are to act for the Comfort and Salvation of their Souls: The one appertains to them as Men, the other as Christians; in both which, all Men are to be engag'd for their present and eternal Welfare.

First, I say, there is a way of a particular Calling, Trade, or Course of Life, wherein all Men are required to walk; and this is to be done, to provide partly for their own private Wants and Necessities, partly for the Necessities of the Publick, and partly likewise to prevent the many Evils and Dangers of Idleness.

Every Man's private Wants and Necessities call upon him to walk in the way of some Calling for the supply of them; for God Almighty deals out his Blessings only to such as labour and seek for them: *'Tis the diligent Hand (saith Solomon) that maketh rich, whilst the lazy Person and the Sluggard sink into Want and Beggary.* 'Twas ordain'd from the beginning, (*Gen. 3. 19.*) That *in the Sweat of their Brows all Men should eat their Bread.* And therefore the Apostle (*2 Thess. 3. 10, 11, 12.*) order'd, that *such as would not work should not eat*; yea, he reckons those in the number of *disorderly Walkers that work not at all*; and those that are such, he exhorts, *that with Quietness they work and eat their own Bread.* As if it were not their own Bread, unless it were got by their own Labour. A Calling ~~men~~ is necessary for every one to be engag'd in, in which they are commanded *to work with their Hands, that they may have lack of nothing,* *1 Thess. 4. 11, 12. 2 Thess. 3. 11, 12.*

Again, Not only Mens private Necessities, but likewise those of the Publick, require them to walk in the way of some particular Trade or Calling. A Heathen could tell us, *That we are not born for our selves only, but our Friends and Country claim a share in us, whose Good and Welfare we ought to consult together with our own.* Now this cannot be, without some particular Calling or Course of Life, wherein to employ our selves for the Publick Good. God Almighty hath placed Mankind in a mutual Need and Dependence on each other, insomuch, that as the Members of the Natural Body are all helpful and serviceable to one another, so all the Members of the Politick Bodies of States and Kingdoms are to be aiding and assisting to every Part for the Good of the Whole: And therefore the Apostle wills, *Ephes. 4. 28. All Men to work with their Hands the Thing that is good, that they may have to give to him that needeth.*

Not

Not that every one is requir'd to engage in manual or mechanical Trades, and literally to work with the Hand; but that they are, in some honest way or other, to be employ'd for the Benefit of Mankind: for some may work with the Head, and assist with their Counsel and Advice; others may be Eyes to the blind, to direct them in their way; or Feet to the lame, to help them forward in it. But still every one must have some Way or Profession which he is to go, otherwise he is an unprofitable Burden of the Earth, and doth but cumber the Ground on which he treads; yea, such a one is not only an unprofitable, but a pernicious Member of the World, for he lives only upon the Spoils of the Creation, and brings Ruin both on himself and others. Moreover,

Thirdly, The end of those Gifts and Talents we are intrusted withal, is, that we should employ and improve them too, in some good Profession, or Course of Life. God Almighty, like the Householder in the Parable, hath committed sundry Talents to his Servants and Followers, as those of Health, Wealth, Wisdom, Time, Strength, and other Abilities: tho some have more, and others less, yet all have some for which they are accountable, according to the Measure and Proportion they have receiv'd. Now these are to be exercis'd and improv'd in some particular Calling or Profession, that they may escape the doom of slothful, and receive *the Reward of good and faithful Servants*. Beside,

Lastly, The many sad and doleful Effects of Idleness may convince all Men of the Necessity of a particular Trade or Calling, wherein they are to go; without which, they wander and fall into many unspeakable Evils, by wasting their Time and Substance, by abusing their Parts and God's Creatures, and perverting the End of all his Gifts, to their great Trouble and Disquiet here, and to the final Ruin at last both of Body and Soul.

But as there is a particular Calling, wherein every one is to go for their bodily Sustenance; so there is,

II. A general way of Religion, wherein they are all to walk as Christians for the Salvation of their Souls: And tho the former be various, according as the different Inclinations and Abilities of private Persons, and likewise the various Necessities of the Publick, require; yet the latter is but one, wherein they are all to go hand in hand together, without Discord or Division, for their common Salvation. This is the way of Christianity, which is sometimes called a Race that every one is to run; sometimes a

Warfare which we are all to accomplish, before we can attain to the Prize of the high Calling of God in Christ Jesus.

Now this way of Religion consists chiefly of what we are to Believe, what we are to Practise, and what we are to Pray for in order to our Salvation: the first of which is briefly summ'd up in the Apostles Creed, the second in the Ten Commandments, the third in the Lord's Prayer; which together with the Doctrine of Repentance, and the Holy Sacraments, are the principal Heads or Parts of the Church-Catechism.

Thus having directed to the Way that we should go, together with the two great Paths of it, that lead to everlasting Life; I proceed to the

Next part of the wise Man's Advice, which is to *Train up Children betimes in this Way*: That is, to train them up in the Knowledge of the Mysteries of a Trade or Profession, that they may live honestly and comfortably here in this World; but chiefly to train them up in the Knowledge of the Mysteries of Religion, that they may live happily for ever in the next. Both these are inculcated by many Precepts and Examples in Holy Scripture: *I know*, says God concerning Abraham, *that he will command his Children, and his Household after him, to keep the way of the Lord, to do Justice and Judgment*, Gen. 18. 19. *Joshua resolv'd, that he and his House should serve the Lord*, Josh. 24. 15. The Israelites were commanded to *Teach their Children the God of their Fathers, and to remember the wonderful Things that had been done for them*, Psal. 78. In the New Testament, Parents are requir'd to instruct their Children, and to bring them up in the Nurture and Admonition of the Lord. St. Luke confirms *Theophilus* in the certainty of those things in which he had been instructed, Luke 1. 4. And St. Paul commends *Timothy*, that *from a Child he had learn'd and known the Holy Scriptures*, 2 Tim. 3. 15. The Holy Scriptures abound with Precepts and Examples to this purpose, requiring Children to be train'd up in the Knowledge and Fear of God.

This *Solomon* would have done betimes; *Train them up*, saith he, *betimes in the Way they should go*. And that, first, because they bring into the World with them strong Propensities to Evil, and great Averseness to that which is Good; which things are to be corrected in the beginning, by an early and pious Education, before they grow head-strong, and improve into vicious Habits and Customs. If the Seeds of Virtue be not sow'd betimes, Vice will soon get ground, and the Mind, like a neglected Garden, will be over-

over-run with Weeds and Briars. And therefore Vertue should have the start, and Children should set out betimes in their Christian Course; in which because they are like to meet with many Difficulties and Temptations, 'tis good to have their Hearts establish'd with Grace, and their Minds fortify'd with the Knowledge of Christ, that they may the better withstand them. And as Children have great need to be thus timely instructed; so is Youth the fittest Season to instil it into them, for Religion never thrives more kindly than when 'tis planted betimes, and the Foundation of it laid in an early Piety. Youth is the Age of Ductility, when the Mind is soft and tender, and like Wax capable of any Impression, which makes it of consequence to stamp it with the best: And being like a Twig apt to bend, great care is to be taken to bend it the right way.

Parents then, and Tutors, should carefully improve this time, and instil good Instructions, when the Mind is so pliable and fit to receive them. By this means they may easily insinuate and plant good Principles in them, which will take off the Difficulties of Religion, and insensibly reconcile them to the severest Acts of a good Life; insomuch, that what seems hard to an overgrown Sinner, will be found easy and pleasant to one that imbib'd these timely Instructions.

Childhood then, and Youth, are the times of entring Men into the Way that they should go, before evil Counsel and Example clap a wrong Bias upon them, to turn them out of it: And being thus initiated betimes, the wise Man here adds, that *when they are old they will not depart from it.* Which is the

Last Thing to be spoken to, *viz.* The Incouragement here given to the Catechizing or Training up Youth, from the lasting Impressions it leaves behind it; *When they are old, &c.*

There are two ways of departing from the Way we should go, either by falling into Idleness and Debauchery, on the one hand; or by falling into Sects and Divisions, on the other: By the one, we depart from the Way of our Calling, as Men; by the other, from the Way of Religion, as Christians. Now the well-training up of Children betimes, is the best Preservative against both: for

First, The inuring them in the beginning to the Business of a Calling, will arm them against Idleness, and the many Evils and Debaucheries that flow from it; the Work and Business which to others is irksome and tedious, will become easy and delightful to

those that are train'd up and accustom'd to it, and by that means keep them from departing from it.

Again, The well-grounding of Children in the Principles of Religion, will in a great measure arm them against the Wiles and Artifices of Seducers; this will help to keep them sound and steadfast in the Faith, and not to be easily led away by the Error of the Wicked.

For when Truth hath taken the first Possession of the Mind, Errors and false Doctrines will find no admission. The true Reason of that Instability in Religion, as well as Corruption of Manners, that abound in the present Age, is the lack of Catechizing, and training up Children in the way of Religion, in the which they should go; for where this is neglected, or the Mind poisoned with evil Principles, it either casts off all Religion, or embraces a very bad one.

Hence our Saviour compares such as lay a good Foundation of Instruction betimes, to a *Wise Man that built his House on a Rock*, which remain'd firm and unshaken, and stood the Shock of the greatest Tempest. Whereas they that lay none, or bad Principles in the beginning, are resembled to the *Foolish Man that built his House on the Sand*, Mat. 7. 27. which was shaken with every Wind, and could not stand the force of the slightest Storm.

From this whole Discourse we may

First, Lament the lack of this early Instruction, which is the great Cause of all the Looseness and Immoralities, and likewise of all the Errors and Divisions of the present Times.

And secondly, we may exhort all Parents and Masters to be mindful of this great and weighty Duty, to catechize their Children and Servants, and train them up betimes in the Way they should go. And since the first Instructions take such fast hold, and make such deep and lasting Impressions on the Mind, they should take care to season their tender Years with good Principles and an early Piety; lest Children, instead of a Blessing and a Comfort to their Parents, prove thro their own Neglect, only a Curse and Grief to them.

DISCOURSE II.

Acts 11. 26. latter part. *And the Disciples were called Christians first at Antioch.*

HAVING shew'd the Nature, Necessity and Usefulness of Catechizing, I come now to the Catechism it self; where the first Question is, *What is your Name?* To which the Answer is, *N. or M. &c.*

The Design of this Question is,

I. To comply with the Weakness of Children; and by an easy and familiar Question at first, to draw them on to learn and receive Instruction; their Name being the first thing they learn or remember: by giving a ready Answer to that, they may be encouraged and emboldned to rehearse more; whereas a harder Question in the beginning might be apt to puzzle and discourage them from going any farther. Again,

II. This Question is designed to lead them on to the Knowledge and Remembrance of their Baptism; which being the first and greatest thing that was done for them, ought to be first learnt and minded by them.

Lastly, Because together with our Name we receive our Christianity: The Design of this Question is, to put Children in mind of their Christian Profession, of which the Name is the outward Badg or Cognizance; and therefore is call'd the *Christian Name*, because we receive that and our Christianity together. So that by asking the Name here, is in effect to ask, What Religion you are of? Whose Followers are you? Or, by whose Name are you called? Which is a fit entrance or beginning of a Catechetical Instruction. So that this Question is not so vain and useless, as some may imagine or object, being so well suited to the tender Years of Children, and so easy an Introduction to farther and more useful Instructions.

But for the better understanding hereof, we may observe farther, That every one beareth at least two Names:

The one is that of the Stock, Family or Kindred, to which they belong; and this they have by Descent from their Parents, whose Name they bear, and which is generally stil'd the Surname.

The other is a Name of Grace and Favour, added or given in our Baptism, or Admission into the Church; and this is called the *Christian Name*. The former signifies that we are Men belonging to the Family of our Parents and Kindred; the latter, that we are Christians, engrafted into Christ's Family, and bear his Name.

And this may suggest the Reason, why the Christian Name is ever placed before the Surname, it being a Title importing a nobler Descent and Dignity. 'Tis a higher Honour to be a Christian, than to be a Man; by the one we are miserable, by the other in a way of being happy: our spiritual Regeneration in Christ, is a matter of greater Comfort and better Hope than our natural Generation; and our Admission into the Church, of much greater consequence than our Entrance into the World: since by this we enter into a *Vale of Tears and Sorrow*; by the other we are led there, *where all Tears shall be wiped from our Eyes, and sighing and sorrow shall flee away*. Moreover, we are to consider

The Use of Names, which serves chiefly for these three Ends, for Distinction, Ornament, and Instruction.

First, Names are given and used for Distinction, that Men may be known from one another: Thus the Surname, which we derive from our Ancestors, and receive immediately from our natural Parents, distinguishes us from others of a different Stock and Family. The Christian Name that is added to it, distinguishes us from those of the same House and Family, as well as others; and likewise from those of a different Religion, for the Name of Christian distinguishes us from Jews, Turks and Infidels. Again,

Secondly, Names are given sometimes for Ornament: Thus all Titles of Honour, all Names of Offices and Degrees, are used not only to distinguish, but to raise and elevate some Persons above others, to adorn their Character, and procure the Respect and Veneration of Mankind; such are the Titles of *Kings, Lords, Knights*, and the like. And here we may note, That as the *Name of Christ is above every Name*, so the Name of Christian is above all other Titles whatever: for these are only earthly Glories, that will soon fade and be laid in the Dust; whereas the other hath a more heavenly Rise, and will not only last, but ennoble us to all Eternity.

Lastly, Names are given likewise for Instruction: This is the Design of all great Names and Titles, namely, to mind those
that

that wear them, that they act worthily and suitable to them, and to avoid all base things that may blemish or dishonour them: and this is the end of our Christian Name, as we shall have occasion to shew after.

Thus we see the Nature, End and Use of Names, and more particularly of that which is here in the beginning of the Catechism enquired after: for beside the Name of our House and Family which we have by Birth, we have another Christian Name which we receive by Baptism; being thereby, as it were, new born, and received into the Household of Faith, becoming the Servants and Followers of Christ, by taking his Name, and thereby distinguished from all others, who either know him not, or disown him.

But because this Sacred Name was not given by chance, or for nothing, 'twill be requisite to enquire into the Original, the Importance, and the Obligation of it. For the

First, The Rise and Original of this Name, our Text tells us the Time when, the Place where, and the Manner how it was given; all which are contained in these words, *The Disciples were called Christians first at Antioch*: where the Holy Ghost having thought fit to record the Time, Place, and Occasion of this memorable Action, it will not be amiss to endeavour a right Understanding, and to make a right Use and Improvement of them.

To which end I must enquire,

First, What they were called before.

Secondly, What was the Motive or Occasion of changing the Name.

Thirdly, How, or in what manner, this new Name was given.

1st. The Disciples receiving a new Name, and being call'd *Christians* first at *Antioch*, leads us to enquire what they were called before: And there were, we find, several Names and Titles given to them in the several Ages of the Church. In the Old Testament they were first called *the Sons of God*, which Name continued from *Adam* to *Abraham*: After which they were stiled *the Seed of Abraham*, and *the Faithful*; which continued to the days of *Jacob*, who being named *Israel* from his prevalency with God, the twelve Tribes that descended from him, were for that reason called *Israelites*: After which, the Kingdom being divided between *Israel* and *Judah*, they were called sometimes *Jews*, and sometimes *Israelites*, which Names continued till the coming of the

the *Messias*: After which they were sometimes called *Nazarites*, sometimes *Galileans*; at other times they were stiled *Brethren* and *Disciples*: which Names continued till this great Meeting of the Brethren and Disciples at *Antioch*, where the Name of *Christian* was solemnly given to them; for the *Disciples* were called *Christians* first at *Antioch*. And this will lead us to consider,

2dly. The Motive and Occasion of giving them this Name of *Christians*; which, as appears by this and the foregoing Chapter, was briefly this.

St. Peter, who was the Apostle of the Circumcision, and preach'd only to the Jews, was warned of God in a Vision, *not to account the Gentiles common or unclean, but freely to eat and converse with them*; thereby perceiving (as himself declares) *that God was no respecter of Persons, but in every Nation, he that feareth him and worketh Righteousness, is accepted with him*. Accordingly finding that *Cornelius* and many other of the Gentiles believed in the Lord Jesus, and received the Holy Ghost as well as the Jews, he preached to them, and commanded them *to be baptized in the Name of the Lord*, as we may read at large in the former Chapter.

In the beginning of this, we find the Brethren of the Circumcision took offence, and contended with *Peter* about this Freedom, till he had declared the Vision whereby his Commission was enlarged, and how he was ordered to converse with, and preach unto the Gentiles; at which they held their peace and glorified God, *who had to the Gentiles also granted Repentance unto Life*. Hereupon the scattered Brethren came to *Antioch*, where *Paul* and *Barnabas*, with many others, assembled likewise: and when both Jews and Gentiles promiscuously receiv'd the Gospel, and were united into *one Body of the Church*, they were united in *one Name* too, and were called *Christians* first at *Antioch*; where the Partition-wall between Jew and Gentile being broken down, and both admitted into one Fold, all Names of Distinction were taken away, and they became all one in Christ Jesus. This is implied in this new Name of *Christian* given to them, which Name is continued to this day.

We find a Prophecy in *Isaiah*, That *when the Gentiles should come in and see the Righteousness of God, all Kings should behold their Glory; and they should be called by a new Name, which the Mouth of the Lord should name*, *Isa. 62. 2*. This Prophecy is supposed to have been fulfilled at this time, when the Disciples were all called

Christians

Christians first at Antioch; at which time this new Name was given both to the Jews and Gentiles, who by this divine Signature were both mark'd up for Christ's Flock. And this will lead us to the

Next Thing to be consider'd, which was the manner how this Name was given: And that, we may well think, was not in a common or ordinary way, but by some divine Impulse and Direction; for the new Name mention'd by *Isaiah*, was such as the *Mouth of the Lord should name*: meaning, that it should come from his Mouth, or be order'd and directed by his holy Spirit. This some have thought to be implied in the Word here used in the Original, which is not ἐκάλειτο, but χρηματίσαν, which signifies not an ordinary way of naming a Thing, but the doing of it in a Divine and Oracular manner; and gives us to understand, that this Name of *Christian* was given not upon a slight Occasion, but for weighty Reasons, and by God's own Appointment.

I shall conclude this Point by inferring two or three Things from what hath been said upon it. And,

First, We learn hence the Dignity of this Christian Name, which is not of a human Extraction, but hath a divine Original; it was not given by the Will of Man, but of God, and had its rise from the direction of his holy Spirit.

For when the Disciples were upon a great Occasion met together, this Name was solemnly given to them from above; which Name is by the Grace and Favour of Heaven derived down to us, the History, as well as the Mystery of which, stands here upon Record in Holy Scripture. So that this Name, by reason of the Relation it bears and gives us unto Christ, is above every Name, and far surpasses all earthly Titles whatever; which should teach us to have a due Honor and Regard for it, and to do nothing that may undervalue or disparage it.

Secondly, This Name of Christian being given upon the uniting of the Jew and Gentile into one Church, may put us in mind of keeping the *Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace*: And being incorporated into one Body, we should all learn to be of one Mind. We find so it was with the first Christians, upon their receiving of this Name, who continued stedfast in one Fellowship and Communion, and were daily in the Temple with one accord, blessing and praising God. After which, when by the Insinuation of false Teachers, some of them began to fall into Parties and

Factions, we find the Apostle beseeching them by the Name of Christ, that they would all speak the same thing, that there might be no divisions among them, but that they would perfectly join together in the same Mind, and the same Judgment, 1 Cor. 1. 10. where the Apostle urges the Name of Christ and Title of Christians, to engage them to Unity, and preserve them from Sects and Divisions. Again, he minds the *Ephesians*, who were some of these Gentile Converts, that they were all called into one Calling, meaning that they were all called Christians; and that they all had but one Hope of this Calling, meaning that common Salvation purchased by Jesus Christ: and from thence presses them to go hand in hand together in the pursuit of it, without Discord or Division, Eph. 4. 25. Moreover we find him pressing the *Philippians* by the Name of Christ, and all the Endearmentes of Christianity, to be of one Accord, and one Mind.

In a word, The sacred Name of Christian signifying an Owner and Follower of Christ, wills all that wear it, to walk on unanimously in the way that he hath chalk'd out and gone before them in, without deserting him, or following any other.

Lastly, From what hath been said concerning the Christian Name, all Parents and Sureties may learn to give Children such Names, as have been famous and honourable for the Vertues and good Actions of those that bore them; for this may stir them up to Imitation, and make them asham'd to dishonour or come short of them. There are some Names that have been rendered Infamous, by the vile and wicked Actions of those that have been called by them, as *Judas*, *Ananias*, *Elymas*, and the like; which, if there be any Vertue or Influence at all in Names, may be apt rather to prompt Men to Evil, than make them followers of that which is Good; such as these ought to be carefully avoided: There are others that may, perhaps, prove a Spur to noble and vertuous Undertakings, from the Example of such as have adorn'd them, and these are fittest to be made choice of. And therefore it hath been an antient and laudable Practice, to give Children the Names of the Apostles, Saints, and Martyrs, and other renowned Heroes, whose Vertues should be rehearsed to them, that they may be quickened and encouraged to do likewise; which is a Practice worthy to be observ'd and kept to.

Thus having shew'd the Original of the Christian Name, viz. The Time when, the Place where, together with the Reason

son why, and the Manner how it was first given; all which afford Matter of great Benefit and Instruction:

'Twill be requisite to add something touching the Importance of that Name, and the Obligation it lays upon all that wear it; which shall be done in the next.

DISCOURSE III.

2 Tim. 2. 19. latter part. *Let every one that nameth the Name of Christ, depart from Iniquity.*

I Shewed in my last, the Original of the Christian Name, together with the Time, Place and Occasion upon which it was given: I proceed now to consider the Importance of this Name, and the Obligation it lays upon all that bear it; which I shall do from these words of the Apostle, *Let every one, &c.* where I must enquire,

- I. What is meant by *naming the Name of Christ*.
- II. What we are to understand by *departing from Iniquity*.
- III. I must shew the Obligation that results from this Name so to do. For the

First, By *naming the Name of Christ*, no more nor no less is meant, than the calling one self a Christian; for to name the Name of any one is a Hebrew Phrase, and signifies to have his Name called upon us, or to be denominated from him. In this sense, we find it frequently used in the New Testament; *Do they not Blaspheme that worthy Name by which ye are called?* or which is called upon you, meaning the Name or Title of Christian, Jam. 2. 7. And what St. Peter saith, *If ye be reproached for the Name of Christ*, he after explains by, *If ye suffer as a Christian*, 1 Pet. 4. 14, 16. By which it appears, that to name the Name of Christ, is to call our selves, or to be called Christians. But,

Secondly, What are we to understand by *departing from Iniquity*, which is here given in charge to all that thus name the Name of Christ? In answer to which, two Things are plainly intended by it.

The one Negative, that is to eschew all such things as are contrary to our Christian Profession.

The other Positive, to follow all such things as are agreeable to the same.

Both these are more fully expressed in *Titus 2. 11, 12, 13, &c.* *The Grace of God which bringeth Salvation* (that is, the Grace of Christ, by which we are admitted to be Christians, and called to a State of Salvation) *teaches us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts; and to live righteously, soberly and godly in this present World, &c.* These, and all other parts of the Christian Life, are implied here in *departing from Iniquity*; in which more is included than seems to be expressed.

And 1st, To *depart from Iniquity*, is to eschew all those Things that are contrary to our Profession: this is the first part of every Christian's Duty, which is expressed in the Epist. to *Titus*, by *denying all ungodliness and worldly Lusts*; and here in our Text, by *departing from Iniquity*; and imports the casting off the whole Body of Sin, or a thorow abandoning the Love and Practice of all Vice and Wickedness. For tho Iniquity be sometimes used to signify only Injustice or Unrighteousness; yet here 'tis of a larger signification, and includes all manner of Impiety and Immoralities, which are indeed but so many Acts of Injustice to God, our Neighbour and our selves. That all such Breaches of God's Laws are contrary to our Christian Profession, will be evident to any that considers the Nature of it, and the Engagements it lays upon all that enter into it. The Christian Religion is an Institution of the strictest Piety; its Precepts are all holy, just and good; its Promises are all Encouragements to a holy and vertuous Life; its Threatnings are the Terrors of the Lord, to awe and afright Men from all vicious and sinful Courses, in which *the Wrath of God is revealed against all Ungodliness and Unrighteousness of Men*. When we enter upon it, we profess to believe the Truth of all these things; and that not barely to entertain our Minds with the Speculation of them, but to regulate our Practice, and to lead our Lives according to them.

Now all Sin and Wickedness is directly contrary to this Profession; it shews that we do not believe what we pretend to, and are not what we would be thought to be, which is the vilest piece of Hypocrisy, yea a downright mocking and dissembling with God. And therefore to *depart from Iniquity*, is to shun
all

all such things as are opposite to Christianity ; and to do nothing that may grossly thwart or contradict it. But this is not all, for the Apostle's Charge here wills all that name the Name of Christ, not only to avoid all that is contrary to their Profession ; but likewise,

2dly, To follow all such things as are agreeable to the same ; this is the second and positive part of a Christian's Duty. The former is express'd in the Epist. to *Titus*, by *denying ungodliness and worldly Lusts* ; the latter, by *living righteously, soberly and godly in this present World* : 'Tis not enough to *cease to do Evil*, tho that be a great Advance in Religion ; but we must *learn to do well*, to compleat the Character of a good Christian. 'Tis but half our Duty to abandon Vice ; to make it entire, we must live in the Practice of all Vertue : For Christ *gave himself for us, not only to redeem us from all Iniquity, but to purify to himself a peculiar People, zealous of good Works*.

The Christian Profession requires purity of Heart, and chastity of Body ; and therefore wills us, as to *cleanse our selves from all filthiness of Flesh and Spirit*, so to *perfect Holiness in the fear of God*. To act suitably to our Profession, is to love, honour and fear God above all things ; to practise an universal Honesty and Charity towards our Neighbour ; and to preserve an unspotted Chastity and Sobriety towards our selves. These things are agreeable to our Profession ; and to live in the Practice of them, is to *walk worthy of the Vocation whereunto we are called* ; 'tis to walk before God unto all well-pleasing, and *as becometh the Gospel of Christ*.

In a word, to *depart from Iniquity*, is to bid adieu to all vicious and sinful Courses ; and because the leaving one way, does evermore ingage us in another, to depart from the ways of Sin, will lead us into the Paths of Holiness and Vertue : in which, all that name the Name of Christ are here required to walk. And this will lead us to the

Third thing to be treated of from these words, namely the Obligation that results from our Christian Name so to do. And this will be evident to any that consider,

1st, That every one that taketh the name of a Christian publicly, owns Christ for his Teacher ; he thereby becomes a Disciple of his, and as a Scholar yields up himself to him as his Master and Instructor : and indeed, well he may, for he is the wisest of all Teachers, one that came from God, and who alone
hath

bath the words of eternal Life. Now a Scholar, you know, is oblig'd to hearken to his Master, to believe his Teacher, and surrender himself to his Instruction and Discipline; without which 'tis impossible he should learn any thing from him, or behave himself suitably to the Relation he bears to him. Hence, he that calls himself a Mahometan, professeth to own the Doctrine of *Mahomet*; he that stiles himself a Lutheran or Socinian, declares his embracing the Tenets of *Luther* and *Socinus*: In like manner, he that calls himself a Christian, professes to entertain the Doctrine of *Christ*, to believe the whole Gospel deliver'd by him, and to assent to the Truth of all the Precepts, Promises and Threatnings contained in it.

Seeing then, the Design of all these is to subdue Sin, and to engage us in the Practice of Holiness and Vertue; he that professes to believe all this (which is done by all that call themselves Christians) must stand oblig'd, in Reason and Conscience, to Live and Act accordingly. Again,

2dly, Every one that nameth the Name of Christ, owns himself a Follower of Christ's Example, as well as Doctrine; he takes him for his Guide and Pattern, and therefore stands oblig'd to imitate him. *Let the same mind be in you, saith the Apostle, that was in Christ Jesus; and walk in Love, as he also hath loved us.* Indeed, Christ often sets himself as a Pattern before us, and bids us *learn of him*, and tread in his steps; and the Scripture frequently represents him under those Titles that render him an Example to us, and require our Following and Imitation of him: He is call'd our Prince, our Captain, our Leader, our Guide; all which terms import, that he hath gone every step before us, and thereby mark'd out our way for us.

Now Christ having given us the highest Example of Holiness and Vertue (for *he did no Sin, nor was any guile found in his Mouth*; but was *holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from Sinners, and made higher than the Heavens*) all that call themselves Christians, are oblig'd to follow his steps, and to come as near him as they can, by a pious Imitation of his most Holy Life. But, beside all this,

3dly, Every one that nameth the Name of Christ, hath engag'd to *depart from Iniquity*. This was solemnly done at their Baptism, as we shall shew hereafter: for when they receiv'd their Christian-name at the Font, they publickly renounced all Sin and Wickedness; and by taking the Name of Christ upon them, gave

gave themselves up to the Conduct of his Precepts and Example: Insomuch, that we must either *depart from Iniquity*, or depart from the most solemn Engagements; and without denying Ungodliness and worldly Lusts, we must deny the most sacred Vows and Promises.

Thus we see the many and great Obligations that result from the Name of Christians, to lead holy and futable Lives; it remains only, that I exhort you to

Answer these Obligations, and live accordingly. Let every one that calleth on, or calls himself by the Name of *Christ*, *depart from Iniquity*; let none debase that high and honourable Title, or wear it about as an empty insignificant Name: remember whose Name it is, and what it imports; and labour to live and act futably to it. We should be very sorry not to be thought or stil'd Christians; let us not then deceive our selves with the bare Title, but fill up that noble Character, and make good our Profession, by walking worthy of, and futable to it. To this end, consider the Fitnes and Reasonableness of so doing, together with the Indecency of the contrary: What can be more agreeable to Reason and good Manners, than to be what we profess? And what can be more absurd, than to pretend to great Matters, and perform nothing like it? He who answers the Design and Dignity of a Christian, acts like one endow'd with a Mind and Reason; but he whose Religion is only in Name and Pretence, whose Actions give the Lye to his Profession, acts of all Men the most absurdly, and lives in a direct opposition to all the Principles of Decency and Discretion. For the Heathens to wallow in Vice and Uncleaness, that serv'd Gods as bad as themselves, can be no great wonder: But for Christians to do so, that profess themselves Disciples of the Holy Jesus, who hath given the best Rules, the best Assistances, the best Encouragements, and was himself the best Example of a Holy Life, must be highly unbecoming.

Again, 2dly, To live like a Christian, is to adorn our Profession, and bring Honour to our Saviour, whose Name we bear; whereas the contrary is the greatest Blemish and Reproach we can bring to both. When we walk by the Rules and Precepts of Christianity, we honour our Master, and credit his Religion; we set it forth to the best advantage, and recommend it to the Love and Practice of Mankind, making it look with such an amiable Countenance, as to invite others to embrace it. But a wicked and ungodly Life brings Disgrace to our selves, and is a Scandal

Scandal to our Profession: This drives others from it, and instead of making Profelites, makes only Enemies to it; yea, this occasions Atheism, and makes many despise and throw off Religion, when they see no better Fruits of it in the Lives of those that pretended to it. This causes *the Name of God to be blasphemed*, and his Ways *evil spoken of*: such Men, like the Spies mention'd by *Joshua*, bring an evil Report upon the Land of *Canaan*; and deal with Christ, as *Simeon* and *Levi* did with *Jacob*, making him to *stink among the Inhabitants of the Land*: The most bitter Invectives that were ever form'd against the Christian Religion, never wounded it half so deep, as the wicked Lives of those that profess it.

In a word, nothing tends more to the Ornament and Propagation of Christianity, than a Holy Life; and nothing serves more to supplant and hinder its Progress, than an unfutable Conversation.

Lastly, To live answerable to our Profession, is a matter of great Comfort here, and will bring us to a much greater Reward hereafter; for this intitles us to all the rich and precious Promises of the Gospel, and gives an undoubted Right to all that Christ hath obtain'd and purchas'd for his Church; whereas the contrary is a matter of infinite Loss and Danger to the Soul. The true Christian that answers his Profession and Character, shall receive the Reward of Christianity; that is, shall be made Partaker of the Inheritance of the Saints in Light; *an Inheritance immortal, incorruptible, and that fadeth not away, reserved in Heaven for us*: Whereas the titular or nominal Christian, that only usurps the Name of Christ for bad Purposes, and wears about his Profession as a Cloak to hide his evil Practices, shall have his Portion with Hypocrites and Unbelievers; his glorious Pretences will be so far from helping him, that they will serve only to sink him into the deeper Condemnation. The Heathens, that had no Knowledge of Christ, and made no Profession of him, shall fare better at the last Day than such as pretended to and abus'd both; for our Saviour himself declares, *That it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon, who wanted the Means of Knowledge, than for Chorazin and Bethsaida, who made a bad use of them*: And St. Peter tells us, *That 'tis better not to have known the ways of righteousness, than having known them, to turn from the holy commandment*. Many, saith Christ, *will come in my name, and deceive many*; meaning that they would not

not only deceive themselves with an empty Name, but impose upon others by their vain Pretences to it; of these he declares, Matth. 7. 22, 23. *Many will say at the last day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name done many wonderful works? Who yet, for not departing from Iniquity, shall be bid to depart from him as workers of Iniquity.*

To conclude, Let us stand upon the Dignity of our Christian-Name, and do nothing that may blemish or disparage it; but rather let us adorn our Profession with the Practice of all Christian Vertues; *that whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are lovely, and of good report, &c. we may not only think on, but also do these things.*

DISCOURSE IV.

Luke 1. 59. *And it came to pass, that on the eighth day they came to circumcise the Child, and they called him Zacharias, after the name of his Father.*

HAVING explain'd the first Question in the Catechism, and shew'd what is necessary to be known touching the Original and Obligation of the Christian-name; I proceed now to the

Second Question; *Who gave you that Name?*

The Answer; My Godfathers and Godmothers in my Baptism; wherein I was made a Member of Christ, a Child of God, and an Inheritor of the Kingdom of Heaven.

In which Question and Answer, Three things must be spoken to, and explain'd.

- I. The Parties that gave the Christian-name, *Our Godfathers, &c.*
- II. The Time when this Christian-name is given, *in our Baptism.*
- III. The Benefit and Privileges we receive thereby; *wherein I was made a Member of Christ, a Child of God, and an Inheritor of the Kingdom of Heaven.* I begin at this time with the

First of these, *viz.* The Parties that gave the Christian-name, and they are here said to be our Godfathers and Godmothers.

E

Now

Now tho this be an antient, useful and laudable Practice; yet because it hath been of late Years made a matter of Dispute and Contention, 'twill be requisite to speak the more fully to it; which I shall do from these words, *It came to pass, that on the eighth day they circumcised the Child, and called him Zacharias, after the name of his Father.*

The words are part of the History of the Birth and Circumcision of St. John, for which we must look back to the 57th and following Verses, where we read, *That Elizabeth's time being full come, she was deliver'd of a Son; upon the News whereof 'tis said, That her Neighbours and Cousins came and rejoiced with her, congratulating the great Mercy had been shew'd to her.* Where by the way, we see, that the custom of Neighbours and Friends coming together, and rejoicing at the Birth and Baptism of Infants, is very antient, and the Practice well-enough warranted, provided it be done with that Modesty, Thankfulness and Moderation that becomes such a Christian Solemnity. After which follow the words of the Text, *And it came to pass, that on the eighth day they came to circumcise the Child, and called him Zacharias, &c.* Where 'tis said, that the Neighbours and Cousins gave the Name, and called him *Zacharias*, after the Name of his Father; tho that Name was afterwards, in an extraordinary way, chang'd into *John*.

From hence then, we see this antient Custom of the Sureties giving the Name in Baptism sufficiently warranted: And this will give occasion to treat the more largely concerning this spiritual Relation. To which end, 'twill be requisite to consider the Name or Title of Godfathers and Godmothers here given to them, and why they are so stil'd. Next, we must enquire into the Ground and Reason of their Institution; and likewise, why the giving the Christian-name is allow'd to them. To which I shall add something

Touching the Usefulness of this Institution, or the Advantages Children may reap by these Sureties; together with

The Duty incumbent on them in that respect. After which I shall answer an Objection to two, and close up with some Application of the whole.

First then, Touching the Name of the Presenters of Children to Baptism, we may note, That as this Custom was deriv'd from the Jews, so are their Names too: We find those that presented Infants

Infants to be circumcised, or the Children of Profelytes to be baptiz'd, were usually called their *Fathers*.

Sometimes they are stiled Witnesses to testify their Admission, and record their Reception into the Church; so they are call'd, *Isa.* 8. 2, 3. where we read, That the Prophetess having brought forth a Son, God Almighty, for some weighty Reasons, appointed the Name, and order'd him to be called *Maher-shalal-hash-baz*; and *Uriah* the Priest, and *Zachariah*, were appointed as faithful Witnesses to record it. But because more is requir'd than barely to witness or record what is done for them, they are frequently stil'd *Sponsores*, or *Fidejussores*, Sureties or Undertakers, because they publickly engage or undertake for the Infants they present to the Font.

But the antient and receiv'd Name, from which there is no reason to depart, is that of Godfathers and Godmothers, or Fathers and Mothers in God; which serve to put them in mind, what Affection they are to bear towards those innocent Babes for God's sake, and that they take care to bring them up in the Fear and Knowledg of God, for whose religious Education they offer themselves; and the Church accepts them as Pledges. And it favours not a little of the antient Piety, to retain the old accustomed Names. From the Name let us proceed to the Thing, and enquire,

Secondly, Into the Grounds and Reasons of this Institution; *i. e.* why the Church requires, and still continues the Use of these Godfathers and Godmothers: For which we have

(1.) The Authority of Custom, and the antient Practice both of the Jewish and Christian Church; for when any Children were to be admitted into either, by Circumcision or Baptism, they had always some selected Persons to present and take care of them, who likewise gave them their Name. That this was the Practice of the early times of Christianity, *Higginus*, and others of the Fathers, plainly declare; and generally all the Reform'd Churches have, and still do allow the Use of Godfathers and Godmothers, and their propounding the Name of the baptis'd Infant: So that they who decry or neglect this laudable Practice, set themselves against the general Current of Antiquity, and oppose one of the most antient and receiv'd Customs of the Church.

But beside the Authority of Custom, which ought to sway much in such Matters, we have many weighty and cogent Reasons

to ground this Custom upon, and warrant this Practice among us. I shall mention some of them, the better to confirm you in the Reasonableness of this Usage. As

First, No Body or Society whatever, will admit any as Members of it, without engaging to be faithful to it, and observant of the Laws of it; for 'tis unreasonable for any to expect the Benefits and Privileges of a Society, without promising to keep the Rules and Customs of it. The visible Church of Christ is a spiritual Society of Christians incorporated into one Body, under Christ the Head; which Body, as it hath many Privileges, so hath it many Rules and Precepts to live by; and he that will have the one, must engage to observe the other.

Now Infants being capable of Admission into this Society, as appears by their Initiation by Circumcision under the Law, and by Baptism under the Gospel; 'tis fit that others should promise that for them, which they cannot for themselves, that they may receive this Benefit, of which, without such an Engagement, they must be utterly incapable. 'Tis (you know) a matter of great Consequence and Advantage, that Children be receiv'd as early as possible into this Christian Society; that so if they be taken away in their Infancy or tender Years, they may die in the Church, and depart as the Members of Christ's Body; and being entred betimes into this sacred Community, which is the ordinary way of Salvation, they may be the more safe and prepar'd to live or die in it. And because Infants cannot make that Engagement in their own Persons, which is necessary to these ends, the Mercy of God, and the Charity of the Church, allows this to be done by others in their behalf; which tends so much to their Security and Advantage.

Again, The very Nature of this Ordinance (as one hath well observ'd) requires some such Persons in the solemnizing of it: for as Circumcision was a Covenant of old, whereby the Jews were to keep the whole Law; so is Baptism a Covenant now, whereby Christians promise to observe the Gospel.

Now because Infants cannot promise this for themselves, nor be admitted into Covenant without such an Engagement; the Church very fitly requires and accepts the doing of this by others in their behalf.

Besides, Faith and Repentance are the necessary Terms and Conditions of this Covenant, which because Children cannot perform, they are admitted into it by the Faith of their Parents,

and

and the Promises of their Sureties; which Promises, when they come to Age, themselves are bound to perform.

Moreover, All Nations allow Children Guardians to contract for them in temporal Matters; which Contracts being for their Benefit, they are to make good when they come to riper Years: In like manner, the Church allows them spiritual Guardians to take care of their Souls, and to promise those things in their Name, that are necessary to bring them into a State of Salvation; which is an Office of higher Charity, and grounded upon better Reason than the other; and will be so esteem'd by all that think the Soul of more worth than the Body, and prefer the weightier Matters of Eternity before the perishing Concerns of this Life.

In short, Children are undone out of the Covenant, into which they have no way to enter but by the Engagement of these Sureties; for tho they want not the Grace of Baptism, yet they are unable to exercise or express that Faith and Repentance which are the necessary Conditions of it: For which Reason, the Church, not without the Allowance or Approbation of God, supplies this by others that undertake for them; which shews both the Reason and Use of Godfathers and Godmothers. And this will lead me to consider,

Thirdly, The Usefulness and Benefit of this spiritual Relation, which may be seen in many Particulars. As,

(1.) 'Tis very much for the Benefit of Infants, in case of the Parents Death; for so it may, and often does happen, that Parents are taken away in the Infancy or Minority of their Children; in which case they are left to the wide World; and if they have none to undertake for them, must be abandon'd to Ignorance, and all manner of Looseness. Now, is it not much for the Advantage of such Orphans, to have three Persons (at least) solemnly engag'd, before God and the Congregation, to look after their Education, and to see them brought up *in the Nurture and Admonition of the Lord*? The Law, we know, allows them Guardians, if the Parents die, to take care of their worldly Goods and Estate; and the Church hath as fitly appointed spiritual Sureties to take care of their Souls, and to mind and promote their spiritual State.

(2.) These Sureties, or Undertakers, are of great Use and Benefit to Children, in case of the Remissness and Negligence of Parents; for it sometimes may, and too frequently does come to pass,

pass, that Parents are but too unmindful of the Welfare and Education of their Children; some thro Inadvertence, others thro Poverty; others again thro too much Fondness, leaving their Children to their own Will and Ways, whereby they become headstrong and untractable; and instead of improving in Vertue, become Proficients only in Vice and Immorality.

Now to prevent these Evils, the Church hath thought fit to join others with them, to promote their Welfare and Instruction; requiring these Godfathers and Godmothers to have an Eye and tender Regard of them, to call upon and encourage them to learn, to quicken Parents in their Duty, and to assist and join with them for their spiritual Good and Welfare. And what a great Benefit and Security is it for Children, to have those, who in case of the Death or Negligence of Parents, stand bound thus to take care of them? Who, that considers the Weakness of Children, and the many Dangers they are expos'd to, can blame the Prudence of this Custom? or call in question, the Usefulness of so charitable and laudable a Practice?

(3.) This is a Means of promoting mutual Love and Kindness among Neighbors, by performing this good Office one for another, and concerning themselves in the Good of each others Children. The Love and good Agreement of Neighbours is so much for the Credit of Religion, and the Convenience of Mankind, that 'tis well worth our while to embrace every thing that may tend to beget or increase it. Now, what greater Endearment, or mutual Obligation, can pass between Neighbours, than this of undertaking for the Good of one anothers Children, and shewing Kindness to these dearest Parts and Pledges of themselves? By this they espouse one anothers Interest, and mutually concern themselves for what is most dear to each other: which is one of the strongest Bonds of Love and Affection to hold them together. And we cannot but know some who, by this spiritual Relation of Godfathers and Godmothers to each others Children, have tied such a firm knot of Love and Friendship, that no Time or Accident have been able to unloose.

Lastly, This way of Undertaking for the Education of Children, tends not only to the good of private Persons and Families, but is of great use and benefit likewise to the Publick; for the well instructing of Youth, and training them up in all divine and human Knowledg, conduces much to the Peace and Prosperity of a whole Church and Kingdom. A good Man is a Prop and Pillar
of

of his Country; yea he is the true *Atlas* that bears up and supports the World: whereas the idle and profligate Person is the Bane and Burden of the Earth, and lives only on the Spoils and Ruin of his Country. Now the After-course of Mens Lives depends much on the well-principling and training 'em up in the beginning: they that set out well at first, commonly keep on in the way they should go; but they that are neglected, or ill taught in the beginning, seldom act or go aright ever after. So that the well educating of Children betimes, is a matter of such great consequence, both to the private and publick Welfare, that we cannot take too great care about it.

In a word; the Benefit that Infants receive by these Undertakers, of being admitted into the Church; the Security they have of being preserv'd from Apostacy, by these Sureties; the good Counsel and Admonitions they have, or should have, from these Monitors; the lively Representation of the New-Birth, by the new and spiritual Relations of Godfathers and Godmothers; shew the Use of them in Baptism to be a pious, wholesom and commendable Practice. And this will lead us,

Thirdly, To consider the Reason, why the giving of the Name is usually committed to these spiritual Relations, and not to the natural Parents; the ground whereof may be briefly this. Beside the natural Birth we receive from our Parents, by virtue whereof we bear their Name, there is a New Birth we receive in Baptism, by virtue whereof we have a New Name prefix'd to it. Now this latter being deriv'd not from our Parents, but from the Grace and Favour of Christ, called therefore the Christian-name; the giving of it fitly belongs to those who undertake for our Christianity, and engage that we shall be bred up and live like Christians; which being confirm'd by the Custom and Authority of the Church in all Ages, is abundantly enough to justify the Practice, and satisfy us of the Reasonableness of it.

Thus we see the Antiquity and Usefulness of Godfathers and Godmothers. But because the Use of them hath been impugn'd of late, either thro the Ignorance or Negligence of such as take this Office upon them, 'twill be requisite to add something touching the Duty of these Sureties, and to stir them up to a faithful Discharge of it; which shall be done in the next Discourse. In the mean time, from what hath been said, we may infer these two things:

1st. The great Goodness of God towards tender Infants, in admitting them so early into Covenant with himself; and because

they

they cannot promise or perform the Conditions in their own Persons, he is pleas'd to admit them upon the Faith of their Parents, and the Engagements of their Sureties. Our Saviour commanded young Children to be brought to him, and blamed those that would have kept them from him; yea, he took them in his Arms, laid his Hands upon them, and blessed them, declaring that theirs was the Kingdom of Heaven. So that the Mouths of Babes and Sucklings, without uttering any thing, shew forth his Praise; since the Mercy that was of old hid from the wise and prudent, is now extended unto Babes.

2dly. We learn hence the Piety and Charity of our Church, in taking Infants into her Bosom, by the Promises of others; and, according to our Saviour's Command and Example, receiving them to the Grace and Mercy of the Gospel.

DISCOURSE V.

Luke 1. 59. And it came to pass, that on the eighth Day they came to circumcise the Child, and called him Zacharias, after the Name of his Father.

I Have already observ'd from these Words, the antient and pious Use of Godfathers and Godmothers, who were wont to give the Christian-Name to the Infants they brought to Baptism; and likewise to undertake for their breeding up, and living answerable thereunto. I proceed now

To the Duty incumbent on these Godfathers and Godmothers, by virtue of this Engagement. This is a Matter well worthy to be known and minded; for too many enter upon this spiritual Relation, merely out of Custom and Formality, without ever considering the Obligation they take upon themselves thereby, or minding the Duties of it. Such Persons would do well, seriously to call to mind the Weight of their Engagement, or what it is they solemnly undertake in the behalf of those Children they present to be baptiz'd: What that is, will be more fully explain'd, when we come to the Baptismal Vow; in the mean time, we may find the Duty of those Undertakers plainly laid down in the Office of Baptism, and more particularly in the Charge given to the Sureties at the end of it; where they are bid,

First,

First, To remember that 'tis their Part and Duty, to see that the Infants they engage for be taught, as soon as they shall be able to learn what a solemn Vow, Promise and Profession, they have made by them. 'Tis impossible for Children to keep a Vow, of which they have no knowledg; and therefore Sureties are to give them to understand, what they promis'd for them, and upon what Terms they stand with Almighty God: and because the first Impressions commonly sink deep and last long, therefore they are to begin early with them, and teach them betimes what has been done for them, and lies upon them to perform. And lest these things should be forgotten, or justled out by other and lesser Matters, they are often to mind and inculcate upon them these weighty and necessary things. The

Second is, That they call upon them to hear Sermons, and bring them as soon as possible to God's House to be farther instructed: *For Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God,* Rom. 10. 7. Sermons are appointed to lead them on to greater Perfection, that have been before initiated in the first Principles of Religion. They that frequent them, are commonly built up in their holy Faith; whereas they that neglect them, not only forget their Vow, but fall into Atheism and all manner of Profaneness. To prevent which, because Sermons will do but little good without laying a good Foundation, therefore Sureties are directed,

Thirdly, To teach them chiefly the Creed, the Lord's Prayer and ten Commandments; which comprizing all that is necessary to be Believ'd, to be Pray'd for and to be Done, contain the whole of a Christian's Duty; and being brief Epitomes of each, as they may be easily learnt, so are they carefully to be taught by all that undertake the Education of Children.

Fourthly, The Sureties are directed to call upon the Parents, that the Children they engage for, may be vertuously brought up to lead a Godly and a Christian Life. Without this, all other Knowledg or Advantage is vain and useles; and with it, a slender Measure of each will be available to their Salvation: and therefore it highly concerns these Undertakers, as to discourage Children from doing Evil, so by all good ways to encourage them in well-doing; and likewise to admonish the Parents, if they find them faulty in either of those Ways. Again,

Fifthly, They are bid to remember them of the great End of Baptism, and the Profession made in it; which is to follow the

Example of our Saviour Christ, and to be made like unto him : that is, to be real Christians, leading Holy Lives, and becoming like unto Christ, into whose Name they were baptized, and whose Religion they profess. And that this may be the more effectually done, the Sureties are directed,

Lastly, To bring Children to Confirmation, when they have learnt their Catechism ; at which time they solemnly ratify and renew that Vow in their own Persons, which was before made by others in their behalf ; and the better to perform it, they are assisted by the Blessing and Prayers of the Bishop, to enable them thereunto. Then, and not till then, are the Sureties freed from this Obligation ; which should make them as forward and earnest for the doing of this, as a Surety is to be freed from another's Debt for which he stands engaged.

But all this (say some of our Sectaries) may be done by the Parents, none being more concerned in the welfare of their Children, and consequently none may be supposed to be more ready and willing to these things than they ; for which Reason they take these Godfathers and Godmothers to be a vain and needless Institution.

Now the Answer to this is easy and obvious ; for the use of Godfathers and Godmothers is not design'd to exclude the Care and Duty of Parents, but to confirm and add to it. Parents are, by the Laws of God and Nature, bound to take care of the Education of their Children, and to seek the good both of their Souls and Bodies ; and there is that natural Affection commonly planted in them, which prompts them to desire and wish well to both. But yet (as was before observed) Parents are mortal, and may die before their Children are grown up to Years of Understanding ; in which case, without some farther care, they may be left helpless and destitute of all Instruction. Again,

2dly. Others may, and have been found too remiss and negligent in their Duty, to the great hazard of their Children, both as to Soul and Body ; and therefore it can be no ways repugnant to Reason or Religion, but very agreeable to both, to have some others joined with them for their better security, and in these and the like cases to provide for their Welfare and Instruction. And therefore it is, and always hath been the pious Wisdom of the Church, to take the best and greatest care it can of those that are received into it ; and lest any, by reason of the Mortality or Negligence of Parents, should be left void of all the Means of Knowledg,

Knowledg, it has ever thought fit to require Sureties to undertake for them, to provide against the worst; and in all cases to afford their best Assistance and Encouragement to them.

And as a threefold Cord is not easily to be broken, so it may well be presum'd, that between the natural Obligation of Parents, and the voluntary Engagement of at least three Sureties, every baptized Infant may be religiously educated in the Knowledge of God, and the Means of being Happy; which is so safe, so excellent, and so laudable a Custom, that 'tis to be wonder'd, how any that tender the good of Children, should have the face to quarrel at it.

But nothing of this (say they) is performed by these Undertakers: For who is there that regards the educating, instructing, or confirming any they engage for? So that Godfathers and Godmothers are become rather a Matter of Formality than Use.

In answer to this, I am sorry that in our degenerate Age there should be so much of Truth in this Objection. It must be granted, that the Number of those is few that enter upon this Office with a due consideration of the Weight and Business of it, or make Conscience of answering the Obligation of it: There are but too many who take this Trust upon them, merely out of Complement and Custom, who assign over the Duty of it to the Parents, and lay aside all thoughts of the Charge committed by it, these are the evil Practices of this licentious Age, which are rather to be lamented, than to be either excused or denied.

However, this can be no Argument against so antient and pious an Institution; the Violation of a Law may argue indeed the Badness of Mens Lives, but can be no just Exception to the Goodness of the Law. Perhaps there is scarce any thing that tends more to the planting of Holiness and Vertue in the Minds of Children, than the early Counsel and Instructions of these Monitors: for hereby they are directed betimes in the way that they should go, and are frequently called upon to go on and keep in it, without turning from it either to the Right-hand or to the Left; by which means Children may grow in Grace as they do in Years, and Babes in Christ may the better arrive to the Fulness of the Stature of Men in Christ Jesus.

Now, shall some Mens neglect bring a Disparagement on so wise and wholesom an Institution? Must the Abuse of a good thing take away the Use of it? Is it not much better to join

together to amend and reform this Neglect, than to make it an Argument for laying aside the Thing?

In short, The Church hath taken the best care it can to prevent this Evil, by joining Three at least with the Parents in this Stipulation, that if either of them neglect their Duty, the others may supply the Defect; but if all of them should be negligent and unmindful of their Duty, they will hazard, not only the Child's but their own Souls, and will dearly rue at last for the Violation of such solemn Engagements.

I shall conclude this Point with a word or two of Advice to the Parents, the Sureties, and such as have been brought up and educated by them.

As for Parents; Let me advise them, not only to take all due care of their Children themselves, but likewise to make choice of such Sureties as are most likely to mind the Duty, and discharge the Trust reposed in them; consulting not so much who will make the largest Presents, as who will most regard the Welfare of their Souls, and be most assistant to them in their pious Education.

To this end, Kindred and Relations may be fitly enough made choice of, from whom more may be expected than from Strangers; Nature and Blood may prompt them more powerfully to their Duty than others, and lay those Sacred Promises more closely upon them.

Again, such as are nigh in their Abode and Habitation, are to be preferred in our Choice before those that are more remote; for Distance is apt to make Men forget their Charge, or at least renders them more incapable of performing it; whereas Neighbours and Friends, by frequent Sight and Conversation, are better minded of it, and more disposed to discharge it.

Moreover, Men of Age and Understanding are to be made choice of on this occasion before Minors; it being a frivolous thing to make one Child engage for another, and to put such whose Bonds are not good in human Courts upon this weighty Office. The Promises made in Baptism are sacred and solemn things, and therefore to be made only by Persons of mature Age and Judgment, who know the Nature and Obligation of them; and not to be used only as Rattles to please Children, and to be play'd with.

Lastly, Men of a serious and orderly Behaviour are to be preferred for this Office, before loose and vain Persons; for such are
very

very unlikely to mind others of their Duty, who are too unmindful of their own; and they who shew little or no regard to their own Souls, may not reasonably be trusted with the Souls of others. The Education of Children, and the Engagements entered into about it, are too great and valuable Things to be committed to those, who daily shew how ready they are to break them; and therefore Men of sober Principles and Practices are fittest to be pitch'd upon for this Undertaking; for those will be most sensible of their Duty, and most likely to make Conscience to discharge it. Such as these Parents should make choice of to assist them in this important Charge, to supply their place in case of Death; or if living, they should fail of their Care and Duty to their Children, they should be willing to hearken to, and attend upon the Admonition of such Supervisors.

Next, To the Sureties, two or three things are necessary to be spoken.

First, Let none rashly and inconsiderately enter upon this Office, or take this weighty Trust only as a formal and customary Matter; but let them consider what they do, and what they engage in it, how they enter as it were into Bond unto Christ and the Church, in the behalf of those whom they present to Baptism; taking the care of them, and engaging for their performing the Conditions of the Covenant; which are things of too great Moment to be lightly and unadvisedly undertaken. And yet,

Secondly, Christian Friends and Neighbours should not be discouraged from this pious Undertaking, by reason of the Duty that attends it: for it is an Office of Charity that has been done for us, and we cannot well refuse it unto others; 'tis an Act of Kindness, not only to Infants by bringing them into the Church, and thereby promoting their Salvation, but likewise to the Parents, by assisting in their Education, and thereby promoting the Joy and Comfort they have in them: nor shall we need to bring any Guilt upon our selves, there being an easy way of delivering our own Souls. To which end, let those that engage in it take care,

Thirdly, To be mindful of their Engagement, and to answer the Obligation of it; let them see that the Children they undertake for learn their Catechism, and be well instructed in the Principles of the Christian Religion; let them call upon the Parents, where they see them too backward in the Education of their Children,
and

and let them bring them to the Bishop to be confirmed, and to take on themselves the Obligation as soon as they may. By this means they may be the Instruments of their Salvation, and likewise save their own Souls. Let none then take Example from others backwardness to neglect this weighty Care. We find Religion almost lost for want of this religious Education of Children; and nothing can better retrieve it, or repair the decay of Christian Piety, than instilling good Principles betimes into them, and fortifying their Youth with early Instructions.

In the last place, Let all baptized Persons, as soon as they come to Years of Understanding, diligently hearken to the good Counsel of their Sureties, taking in good part all their Reproofs, and thankfully receiving all their Admonitions: so will they make a good use of their Godfathers and Godmothers, and reap the Benefit of this pious Institution; still learning and improving by them, and thereby becoming *wise unto Salvation*.

DISCOURSE VI.

Luke 1. 59. *And it came to pass, that on the eighth day they came to circumcise the Child, and they called him Zacharias, after the Name of his Father.*

IN explaining to you the second Question and Answer of the Catechism, I have spoken to the

First thing contained in it, *viz.* The Parties that give the Christian-name, which we are there told are our Godfathers and Godmothers; where we have enquired into the Antiquity, the Reason and Usefulness of that Spiritual Relation, together with the Duties incumbent on all such as enter into it.

I proceed now to the

Second thing contain'd in this Question and Answer, and that is, The Time of giving the Christian-name; which our Text tells us, was at the Circumcising of Children; our Catechism futable to it, at the Baptizing of them, which succeeded in the room of the former. Where we find our Church, according to the Direction of the Holy Scripture, takes particular notice of the Time and Season of this memorable Action. And therefore in speaking to it, I must observe,

I. The

I. The Solemnity that hath been ever used at the giving of Names.

II. That Circumcision under the Law, and Baptism under the Gospel, have been the usual Times of giving the Christian-name.

III. I must enquire into the Reason why these Times were chiefly made choice of for this purpose. For the

First, We find all Nations have been ever careful of giving Names to their Children; partly for Distinction, that one Person might be known and distinguished from another; partly for Instruction, that Children bearing the Name of great and worthy Persons, might be thereby stirred up to Imitation; and partly likewise to preserve the Memory of their Ancestors, who by deriving down their Names to Posterity, do in a manner survive themselves, and obtain a sort of Immortality. Hence we read, that the most barbarous Nations have observ'd this Practice of giving their Names to their Children, the better to continue their Memory, and to live in their Posterity. And all civilized Countries have been more especially careful of it, knowing that tho Children are listed in the Number of Mankind by their common Nature, yet they cannot enter into their Society and Commerce without a Name; for tho their Birth may make them Men, yet 'tis their Baptism only that makes them Christians. And therefore in all Religious Nations, the giving of Names hath been ever done with great Solemnity; some have set apart some certain Days, as the Seventh, Eighth, or Tenth, according to their particular Customs, for the more solemn performance hereof. The Jews did it on the Eighth Day, which was the Day of Circumcision, as appears by our Text, *It came to pass, that on the Eighth Day they circumcised the Child, and called him Zacharias, &c.* The Grecians were wont to offer Sacrifice at the giving of the Name, to make it the more lucky and prosperous; and this is done, not without Solemnity, among us to this day.

But what have been the usual Times of giving Children their Names? This our

Second Particular will inform us, namely the Day of Circumcision under the Law, and the Day of Baptism under the Gospel, which you know continues with us to this Day. That the Jews named the Child at Circumcision, the Holy Scriptures, as well

well as the Jewish Writers, expressly tell us. We read in *Gen.* 21. 3, 4. *That Abraham circumcised his Son the eighth Day, and called his Name Isaac.* The same is affirmed here of *St. John*; yea, we find our blessed Saviour, being made under the Law, in compliance with it, was circumcised the eighth day, and had his Name called *Jesus*, *Luke* 2. 21.

But tho our Saviour changed this painful Rite of Circumcision into the more easy one of Baptism, yet he made no Alteration as to the Time and Custom of giving the Name, but left that to continue under the new, as it was under the old Dispensation. Accordingly we find this Time assigned and used to this purpose ever since, the Christians still naming their Children at their Baptism, as the Jews were wont to do of old at their Circumcision. And because the Name hath been since changed, and all other Appellations swallow'd up and buried in the common Name of *Christian*, some have supposed some great Mystery in it, and that our Saviour alluded herein to that new Name which he promised to give his Servants, *Rev.* 2. 17.

However that be, 'tis most certain that the Custom of imposing the Christian-name at the time of Baptism, hath continued in all Ages of the Christian Church ever since: yea, we find that Persons baptized in their riper Years, have changed their Name at Baptism from what they had before; as *Saul* did at his Baptism into *Paul*, *Acts* 13. 9. And the same may be shewed in many other Instances; especially where the Names were taken from Idols or false Gods, it being forbidden by Councils (as a Learned Man hath observ'd) to give the Children of Christians any Heathen Names; requiring them likewise to impose only the Names of the Apostles, or other eminent Saints, which they were to wear, not barely as Ornaments, but as Encouragements to follow the steps of their Examples; or if we bear a Name that hath not been yet Exemplary, we endeavour to make it so by our Holy Lives and Actions. And this will lead me to the

Third thing propounded to be spoken to, which was to enquire into the Reason why the Christian-name hath been thus solemnly given at our Baptism; for which these two Reasons may be given.

1st. Because that it is the time when we solemnly enter upon Christianity, and therefore is the fittest time to receive the Christian-name; for this being a Badge that we belong to Christ,
we

we cannot more properly take it upon us, than when we are lifted under his Banner. We bring one Name into the World with us, which we derive from our Parents; and that serves to mind us of our Original Guilt, and that we are born in Sin: But this new Name we fitly receive at our Regeneration in Baptism, to mind us of our new Birth, when old Things pass away, and all Things become new. So that this new Name is design'd to represent our new Nature, when being washed in the Laver of Regeneration, and thereby cleansed from our natural Impurities, we become in a manner new Creatures, and solemnly dedicate our selves unto God.

We find something like this even among the Heathens. The *Romans* had a Custom of washing and cleansing of Infants from their natural Pollution, which they call'd the Day of Lustration; at which time they were wont to give them their Names, call'd therefore *Dies Nominalis*. The *Grecians* had a Custom of carrying Infants, a little after their Birth, about the Fire; which was undoubtedly a Ceremony of consecrating them to their Household Gods: *And this* (as *Hesychius* tells us) *was the time of their imposing Names upon them.*

So that the naming of Children at this time, hath been thought by many to import something more than ordinary, and to carry with it a mysterious Signification.

Again 2dly, The time of Circumcision of old, and of Baptism since, hath been fitly made use of for this purpose, because of the Company that commonly attend those Solemnities, who thereby become Witnesses of the Child's Reception into the Church, and likewise of the Name then given to it, if any Doubt should after arise about it. Moreover, their beholding the Minister, after Christ's Example, taking the Child into his Arms, and solemnly, before the Congregation, giving it a Christian-name, may admonish all that are present of their Baptism, and call to mind that they receiv'd their Name and Christianity together.

Lastly, The receiving our Name at Baptism, may serve to signify, that we then begin to be some-body, when we are consecrated unto God; for before that, we are *nullius Nominis*, Persons of no account, and not worthy of a Name. 'Tis our Dedication unto God by Baptism, that entitles us to a Christian-name; and our entrance into the Church, that inrolls us in the number of Christ's Followers. In short,

Except we be born again of Water and the Holy Ghost, it had been better for us not to have been born at all. And because we date our Christianity from this new Birth, 'tis fit that from thence we derive our Christian-name, which is the outward Badge and Cognizance of it.

I shall shut up this Point with a Lesson or two to be learn'd from it.

And (1.) we may learn from hence, what a Value we ought to have for the Holy Sacrament of Baptism, at which time we have our new Birth, and receive a new Name to represent it. Without this, we are in the State of Infidels, *without Christ, aliens from the Commonwealth of Israel, and Strangers to the Covenant of Promise; having no hope, and without God in the World*, as the Apostle describes the Misery of our natural State, Eph. 2. 12. In this forlorn condition we are unworthy of the Christian-name, till we who by Nature are far off, are by Baptism brought nigh, and engrafted into Christ.

The Name we receive from our natural Parents, is the mark of the Guilt and Shame we derive from them. 'Tis the Christian-name that inrolls us in the Register of the Church, and is alone written in the Book of Life. And this shews us the high Esteem we are to have of this sacred Rite of Baptism, by which alone we begin to be some-body in God's Account, and are listed into the number of his People.

Memorable to this purpose is the Story we find mention'd in the Life of Lewis the IX. of France, for his Piety call'd St. Lewis; who being ask'd, *By what Title he would be signaliz'd to Posterity after his Death?* answer'd, *By Lewis of Poisy.* And being told, *That that was an obscure Place, and not fit to adorn the Character of so great and so good a Prince;* answer'd again, *Lewis of Poisy:* And being farther told, *That there were other Places which he had signaliz'd by his Valour, and made renown'd by the Victories he had obtain'd in them;* answer'd still, *That he would be remember'd by Lewis of Poisy, because there he obtain'd the greatest Victory he ever had, even that over the Devil,* meaning that he was Christen'd there. By which we see what a high Esteem he had of his Baptism; how he valu'd no Name like that of a Christian; and no Place like to that where he received it.

Lastly,

· Lastly, The new Name we receive in Baptism, should put us in mind of leading a new Life. This is the Sense of the Apostle in those words, *We are buried with Christ in Baptism, that like as he was rais'd from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of Life*, Rom. 6. 4. Where the rising out of the Waters of Baptism, into which they were antiently plunged, represents the rising again from the Dead. And the washing off the Impurities of the Flesh by that means, represents that newness or Purity of Life they were oblig'd to ever after. *As many as are baptized into Christ* (saith the same Apostle) *have put on Christ*; that is, they have taken his Name upon them, in token of a new Nature they receive from him; and therefore they are not to put it off again, or to walk unworthy of it.

We read of an antient Custom among the *Romans*, to write the Soldier's Name upon his Shield, to signify that his Honour was engaged to keep it, and that he could not part with one without the loss of the other. In like manner, our blessed Saviour hath so order'd it, that we receive our Name and our Faith together; by which we stand oblig'd to preserve both, and may not without eternal Infamy shrink or depart from either. 'Twas a smart Rebuke that was given to a Coward, who bore the Name of *Alexander*, *Vel mutes nomen Alexandri vel fortiter pugnes*; either change thy Name, or shew thy Valour, that the renown'd Name of *Alexander* be not dishonour'd by thy Cowardise. The same *Item* may be given to all that are called Christians, either quit that sacred Name, or live answerable to it, that so honourable a Title be not disparag'd by an unsutable Conversation.

Let us then often call to mind this sacred Name that is call'd upon us; and by it remember that we are Christians, that we may not do any thing unbecoming so noble a Title: let it serve as a Spell or a Charm to drive away the Devil from us, or as a Shield to repel all the fiery Darts of the Wicked. We read of a holy Virgin that conquer'd all the Temptations of the Devil, by saying these words, *I am Baptized, I am a Christian*, whenever she was assaulted by them. And indeed, the frequent and serious Consideration of these Things would mightily help to arm us against the strongest Temptations.

Thus I have consider'd all that is necessary to be known touching the Time of giving the Christian-name, which is in our Baptism.

The next thing is concerning the Benefits and Privileges confer'd in it, in these words, *Wherein I was made a Member of Christ, a Child of God, and an Inheritor of the Kingdom of Heaven.* Of which hereafter.

DISCOURSE VII.

Ephes. 5. 30. *We are Members of his Body.*

WE are yet upon the Second Question and Answer in the Catechism, in explaining whereof I have spoken,

First, To the Parties that give the Christian-name, viz. *Our Godfathers and Godmothers*; together with the Antiquity and Use of them.

Secondly, To the Time of giving the Christian-name, viz. *In our Baptism*; together with the Grounds and Reasons of this antient Practice. I proceed now to the

Third thing to be spoken in it, and that is the Benefits and Privileges convey'd by and confer'd in our Baptism, contain'd in these words, *Wherein I was made a Member of Christ, a Child of God, and an Inheritor of the Kingdom of Heaven.*

And this will lead me to consider Baptism as a Covenant made between God and Man, which (as all other Leagues and Covenants) hath Promises and Conditions annex'd to it.

The Mercies and Blessings promis'd on God's part, are those before recited, *Wherein I was made a Member of Christ, &c.*

The Duties and Conditions to be perform'd on Man's part, are rehears'd in the following Question and Answer, where the Baptized Party engages *to renounce the Devil, &c.*

I begin, as our Catechism directs us,

I. With the Mercies and Blessings promised on God's part, and they are these three: (1.) *To be made a Member of Christ.* (2.) *A Child of God.* And (3.) *an Inheritor of the Kingdom of Heaven.* All which are very noble and invaluable Privileges, as will appear by a particular Explication of them: Accordingly I shall speak to the

First

First of them at this time, from these words of the Apostle, *We are Members of his Body*. For the better understanding whereof, I must enquire what is meant by the Body of Christ; what by being a Member of this Body; and what are the Benefits and Privileges that appertain to, and are convey'd by it. For the

1st, By the Body of Christ we are to understand the Christian Church, which is frequently in Scripture stiled the Body of Christ, *Rom. 12. 4, 5*. Yea, sometimes it is stiled Christ himself, as *1 Cor. 12. 13, 14*. *As the Body is one, and hath many Members, and all the Members of it being many are one Body; so also is Christ; that is, so is the Christian Church*.

Now this Christian Church is a Spiritual Society of all Christian People, called out of the World, and united unto Christ as the Head, and to one another as the Members. Which Description of the Church, because 'tis a matter so necessary to be known, I shall endeavour to explain, and bring down to the meanest Capacities. I call it then,

(1.) A *Society*, to distinguish it from a confused Multitude, that hath no Order or Subordination of Parts; whereas a Church is a Regular Society, consisting of Superiors to teach and govern, and Inferiors to be taught and govern'd by them.

Again (2.) I call it a *Spiritual Society*, to distinguish it from Political Bodies and Corporations, made by human Authority and Compact; whereas the Church is a Body made and animated by a divine Spirit. Again,

(3.) I call it a Spiritual Society consisting of *all Christian People all the World over*, to distinguish it from the Jewish Church, which was confined only to one Nation; the Jews being then the peculiar People of God, having a Partition-wall to separate them from others; for to them only appertain'd the Adoption, the Glory, the Covenant, and the giving of the Law, and the Promises, *Rom. 9. 3, 4*. But now that Inclosure is taken down by the Accession of the Gentiles: *For Christ is our Peace*, saith the Apostle, *and hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle Wall of Partition between us*, *Eph. 2. 14*.

So that the Christian Church is now no longer confin'd to one particular Place or Nation, but is become Catholick and Universal, and spread over the Face of the whole Earth; insomuch that in every Nation, he that feareth God, and worketh Righteousness, is accepted with him, *Acts 10. 35*. Moreover,

(+) I

(4.) I stile it a Society of Christian People, *called out of the World*, to distinguish it from the Synagogue of Satan, and to separate Christ's Flock from the unsanctify'd Herd of reprobate and wicked Men; for the Church is a select Body of People, called out and separated from the profane part of the World, to be a *chosen Generation, a royal Priesthood, a holy Nation, a peculiar People*, 1 Pet. 2. 9.

St. Paul tells us of the Christians, that they are called out of the World to a holy Profession or Calling, Eph. 4. 3. 2 Tim. 1. 9. and therefore in many places of Scripture, they are stil'd the *Called*. And our Saviour declares of them, *That tho they are in the World, yet they are not of the World, but are called or taken out of it*, John 17. 6, 11, 16. Again,

(5.) I stile it a Society of Christians call'd out of the World, and *united unto Christ as the Head*; whereby being united, 'tis distinguish'd from an aggregate Body, or confused Heap, that hath no Union or Connexion of Parts, but lie loose and disjointed from one another; whereas the Church is a compact Body, *knit together by that which every Joint supplies*, Eph. 4. 16. And therefore we find it often compar'd to a House, a Building, a Temple, where all the Parts are cemented and joined together. And this Union is said to be first and chiefly to Christ, as the Head, from whence they derive all spiritual Strength and Grace: for as in the natural Body, the Head is the Fountain of Life and Spirit, from whence 'tis deriv'd into the other Parts; so from Christ, the mystical Head of the Church, all the Body, by joints and bands, having Nourishment minister'd, increaseth with the Increase of God, Col. 2. 19.

Lastly, I stile it a Society of Christians, not only united to Christ as the Head, but to *one another as the Members*; and by this the Church of Christ is distinguish'd from the Conventicles of Sectaries, which are all divided and disjointed from one another: whereas the Members of Christ's mystical Body are join'd together by one Communion and Fellowship, which are as it were the Nerves and Sinews to keep them together; *For we being many* (saith the Apostle) *are all but one Bread*, that is, one Communion nourished by the same spiritual Food, eating the same spiritual Meat, and drinking all of the same spiritual Cup: *For the Bread that we break* (as he goes on) *is it not the Communion of the Body of Christ? and the Cup that we drink of, is it not the Communion of the Blood of Christ?* And being all partakers

kers of both, all the Members are joined together in the same Fellowship and Communion, which is the Cement that unites and keeps them together.

So that this Body is but one, acted by the same Spirit, called into one Hope of their Calling, having the same Lord, *i. e.* the same Head or Master to preside over it, the same Faith professed in it, but one Baptism to enter into it, and but one God and Father of all to continue and preserve it; as we read *Ephes. 4. 4, 5, 6.*

Thus we see what we are to understand by the Body of Christ, namely, the whole Christian Church; which tho subdivided into many particular Churches and Congregations for the convenience of Worship and Discipline, are yet all united into one Body, or Catholick Church, under Christ their Head, and joined to one another as Members by one Communion. From whence I proceed,

2dly, To enquire what it is to be a Member of this Body: which in short, is to be admitted into this Society of Christians, and to the Enjoyment of all the Benefits and Privileges of it. And this is done by the Sacrament of Baptism, by which we are received into the Bosom of the Church, and ingrafted into this one Body of Christ. Hence we are said *to be baptized into Christ*; that is, by Baptism admitted into the Christian Church: *And as many* (saith the Apostle) *as have been thus baptized into Christ, have put on Christ*; that is, have put on that Relation unto Christ, that Members have to the Body. For this Reason Baptism is sometimes stil'd, *The Door that opens into the Christian Church*; sometimes, *The Gate that leads us into Christ's Fold*; more frequently, *The beginning of a New and Christian Life*; and *the first step to Fellowship with God and his Saints*. And this was the Reason why the Font was antiently placed by the Door or Entrance into the Church; to signify that by that we are admitted into the Congregation of Christ's Flock. And the Font's being put in the way to the Altar, signifies Baptism's being the first step to the holy Place; and being thereby taken into the number of God's Children, we may be embolden'd to go on, and draw nigh to his holy Table: *For by one Spirit, saith the Apostle, we are baptized into one Body, and are made to drink of the same Spirit, 1 Cor. 12. 14.* meaning, that being thus enter'd into it, we are entitul'd to the Holy Ordinances of the Gospel; and being made Members of Christ, that is of his Church, we are thereby instated in all the Promises and Privileges that belong to it. And this will lead us to enquire,

3dly,

3dly, What are those Favours and Privileges that appertain to us as Members of Christ's Church. And tho these are many and great, yet I shall mention two only as common to all the visible Members of it. And these are,

(1.) The Liberty of God's holy Word and Sacraments; together with all other means of Grace, in order to a holy Life.

And (2.) The divine Aids and Assistances of God's Grace and holy Spirit, in order to render them useful and effectual to that end. Of each of which I must speak a word or two particularly; and,

First, All the Members of Christ's Church, as such, have a right to the hearing and reading of God's Word, and receiving his holy Sacraments, together with all other means of a holy Life, of which nothing but their own perverse and stubborn Refusal can deprive them. For Christ's Commission to his Apostles, and in them to all other Pastors and Ministers of his Church, was, *Go teach all Nations, baptizing them, &c.* Mat. 28. 19. And tho they were sent first only to the *lost Sheep of the House of Israel*, yet their Commission was after enlarg'd, and extended to the Gentiles also, and *to as many as the Lord our God should call*; so that no baptized Christian now is to be excluded from the publick Assemblies and Instructions of the Church, that is willing to learn, nor to be debar'd of the holy Sacrament, that does not unfit himself to receive it.

Now this, considering the Excellency of the divine Law, and how far the Doctrine of the Gospel exceeds all other Pretences to Revelation, will be found a vast and inestimable Privilege. The Precepts of Christ infinitely surpass, not only the wisest Instructions of the Heathen Moralists, but even the more sacred Institutions of *Moses's Law*: And tho no Nation had wiser and better Laws than the Jews, yet the Precepts of Christ as far exceed them, as the Light of the Sun does that of the Stars. And what a Happiness is it to be under the Influence and Conduct of such bright Revelations? And, as Christ hath set up this clear Light in his Church, so hath he caused it to shine to all the Members of it; the Word and Sacraments being free to all that desire to have access to them; and none but such as wilfully cut off themselves, are to be excluded from the benefit of his Institutions. But then,

Secondly, Another and greater Privilege than this, belonging to the Members of Christ's Church, is, not only freely to enjoy

joy the Means of Grace for the good of their Souls, but to derive Grace and Strength from Christ, to render them effectual to their Salvation: For as the Head conveys down Life, and Sense, and Motion, to the inferior Members; so does Christ derive down the Assistance of his Grace and holy Spirit upon the Members of his Body, by which they are quickened and enabled to every good Word and Work. And this is done partly by our Union with Christ, the Head of the Catholick Church; partly by our Union and Subordination to the lawful Governours and Teachers of it; and partly likewise by our Union with one another: For as in the natural Body there are Nerves that branch from the Head through the Body, and convey the animal Spirits to every Member; so in the mystical Body of the Church, there are the Ordinances of the Sacraments, of Preaching and Praying, and other holy Offices, administered by Persons set apart for that purpose, to convey those ordinary supplies of Grace that are necessary to the Health and Vigour of every Part. By which means it is, that the Grace of God is sufficient for us, and we can do all things requir'd and expected from us through Christ that strengthens us. These are some of the inestimable Privileges that belong to us, as we are by Baptism made the Members of Christ. From whence we may infer,

1st, The unspeakable danger of obstinate and scandalous Wickedness, which justly forfeits these Privileges, and causes Men to be depriv'd of them. Our blessed Saviour hath left a Power in his Church, by Excommunication, to cut off obstinate Offenders from the Benefit and Blessings of it; he hath order'd, that such as will not hearken to the Church, or be subject to the Power he hath set up in it, be no longer accounted Christians, but as Heathens and Publicans. St. Paul commanded the incestuous *Corinthian* to be deliver'd up to Satan, and to put from among them that wicked Person.

Now, as 'tis a singular Favour to be received within the Pale of the Church, and to enjoy the foremention'd Mercies and Privileges of it; so 'tis an unspeakable Misery to be turned out, and to be barred of the forecited Blessings. And the rather, because they who are justly shut out now from the Church Militant, will be excluded likewise from the Church Triumphant hereafter; and the Sentence pronounced against them here on Earth, will be then ratified in Heaven.

2dly, We may infer from hence, the extreme folly and danger of Schism, whereby Men voluntarily cut themselves off from the Body of Christ, by their own wilful and causeless Separation; and fall into those Sects and Divisions, which are not so much Parts of the Church, as the Excrescences and Corruptions of it. The Sin of Schism lies in breaking the Unity of the Church, and thereby dividing the one Body of Christ. The Folly of it lies in falling off from the one Communion of the Church, and thereby depriving our selves of the Promises and Blessings annex'd to it. The Danger of it is, That by both these we cut our selves off from Christ, and shut our selves out of all hopes of Mercy and Salvation from him. *I am the Vine (saith Christ) ye are the Branches; except ye abide in me; that is, in my Church, ye can bear no Fruit, but, like withered Branches, are only fit to be cut down and cast into the Fire.*

Lastly, From what has been said, let us learn to set a high Value upon this Church-Membership which we have by our Baptism, and the inestimable Privileges we receive thereby; endeavouring to make a right Use of them, by frequenting the publick Assemblies, and receiving the holy Sacraments; which not only tend to the present Comfort and Edification of our Souls, but to the future and eternal Happiness and Salvation of them.

Let none slight these invaluable Blessings, by neglecting or contemning the publick Worship, or turning their backs upon God's holy Ordinances; for this is to make light of Christ, to thrust Salvation from them, and to incur the Peril of eternal Damnation.

DISCOURSE VIII.

Rom. 8. 14. *As many as are led by the Spirit of God, are the Sons of God.* And Verse 16. *We are the Children of God.*

HAVING explain'd the first Privilege confer'd in Baptism, namely, Church-Membership, contain'd in those words, *Wherein I was made a Member of Christ*; I come now to the

*

Second,

Second, in these words, *Wherein I was made a Child of God*; of which I shall discourse to you from the Words of the Apostle, *As many as are led by the Spirit of God, are the Sons or Children of God.* To be led by the Spirit of God, is, among other ways, to be led to the Waters of Baptism, where we are said to be born again, *of Water and the Holy Ghost*, John 3. And as many as are thus led by the Spirit of God, the Apostle tells us, *are the Sons of God*, or, as the Catechism expresses it, *the Children of God.* For the better explaining whereof, I must enquire

First, What we are to understand here by *a Son or Child of God.*

Secondly, What are the Benefits or Privileges of this Relation. And,

Thirdly, I must shew that this is promis'd and convey'd to us in Baptism; of which particularly. And,

First, I must explain what is here meant by *a Son or Child of God.* In order to which we may observe,

First, That to be a Son of God here, cannot be meant of a Son by eternal Generation: for this was the sole Privilege of Jesus Christ, and peculiar to him; who is therefore in this sense said to be *the only Son*, or *the only begotten Son of God.* Nor yet,

Secondly, Are we to understand by it, *a Son of God by Creation*; for in this sense, the Angels and all Mankind, even those without as well as within the Church, are the Sons of God. What then must this Title or Appellation of a Child of God mean? Why, there is a double Sense in which we are said by Baptism to be *made the Children of God*; namely, by spiritual Regeneration and Adoption, both which are invaluable Favours and Blessings; and being both imply'd here in our Catechism, must be particularly spoken to.

1st, We are in Baptism made the Children of God by spiritual Regeneration: this St. John expresses, *by being born again of Water and the Holy Ghost*; St. Peter, *by being begotten again to a lively Hope.* By our natural Generation we are born in Sin, and are thereby the Children of Wrath; but by Baptism are we regenerated or born again, and are thereby made the Children of Grace. By this new Birth old things pass away, and all things become new: the original Guilt and Pollution we derive from our first Parents, are wash'd away in the Waters of Baptism, and we are thereby cleans'd and purify'd into new Creatures.

This St. Paul told the *Corinthians*, 1 Cor. 6. 11. where, after he had reckon'd up the vilest of Sinners, and the Corruption of our natural State, *Such* (saith he) *were some of you, but ye are washed and sanctified by the Name of Christ and the Holy Spirit*; meaning, That they were cleans'd by Baptism from their natural Impurities: and elsewhere, we are said to have *our Hearts sprinkled from an evil Conscience, and our Bodies washed with pure Water*. By this new Birth we are here said to be made the Children of God. This is the frequent Language of the Holy Scriptures, where Baptism is declar'd the Instrument of our new Birth, and the Font the *Laver of Regeneration*. This was likewise the Doctrine of the primitive Fathers and Councils, tho some modern Systems have taught otherwise, and misled unwary Persons in this point.

2dly, We are herein made the Children of God by Adoption and Grace, by which we are taught and enabled to cry *Abba Father*: for so the Apostle tells us, Gal. 4. 6. Being thus made Sons, *God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your Hearts, crying, Abba Father*; and Rom. 8. 15. *Ye have not received the Spirit of Bondage again to fear, but ye have receiv'd the Spirit of Adoption, whereby ye cry Abba Father*. Now Adoption (you know) is the receiving or engrafting a Stranger into another's Stock or Family, and allowing him all the Favours and Privileges of a natural-born Child. And this is commonly upon the Death or Defect of natural Issue; of which many Instances may be given in all Ages and Countries. In like manner, God Almighty vouchsafes to admit us that were Strangers into his Family, and to call us to the Adoption of Sons; and that not to supply the defect, but to increase the number of his Children. The Jews before were the only People or Children of God, Deut. 14. 1, 2. *For to them appertained the Adoption, the Covenant, the giving of the Law, and the Promises*, Rom. 9. 3, 4. But God hath now enlarg'd his Family by receiving the Gentiles into it, and adopting them to the Privileges of Sons: for so saith St. John, *As many as received him, to them gave he Power to become the Children of God*; John 1. 12. By which means, we that were afar off, *Aliens from the Commonwealth of Israel, and Strangers to the Covenant of Promise, are now made nigh by the Blood of Christ*; and from Strangers and Foreigners, are become *Fellow-Citizens with the Saints, and of the Household of God*, Eph. 2. 12, 13, 19. And all this not for any Merit or Intreaty of ours, but merely of his

his own free Grace and good Will, having *predestinated us to the Adoption of Children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good Pleasure of his Will*; accepting us in his beloved, to the *Praise and Glory of his Grace*, Eph. 1. 5, 6.

In short, We are the Children of God by our new Birth, and a certain Covenant-Relation contracted thereupon: for God hath thereby enter'd into a new Covenant with us, in which he hath promis'd to be to *us a God*, and we are to be to *him a People*; and elsewhere, that he will be to us a *Father*, and we are to be to him as *Sons*; which is a signal and unexpressible Favour. And this will lead us,

Secondly, To consider the many and great Benefits and Privileges contain'd in, and convey'd by this Relation; for as we are the Children of God, we are intitul'd to many rich and precious Promises, and invested into many great and glorious Privileges: I shall mention some of them.

And 1st, As Children of God, we receive the Remission of Sins: Our original Sin is done away in Baptism, and wash'd off in the Laver of Regeneration; so that for Infants dying before the commission of any actual Transgression, there can be no reason to doubt of their Salvation; and for all actual Sins committed after, we are secur'd of a Pardon upon sincere and hearty Repentance: this is a Privilege that belongs to all within the Covenant, of which they that are out of the Church have no share. St. Paul plainly specifies this as a Privilege of the adopted Sons and Children of God, telling us, that such have by Redemption in Christ, *the forgiveness of Sins, according to the Riches of his Grace*, Eph. 1. 3, 4, 7. and the Nicene Creed teaches us to *believe one Baptism for the remission of Sins*. Again,

2^{dly}, By this new Relation of Sonship, we are secur'd from the Rigour of the first Covenant; for that exacted a perfect and unsinning Obedience, and pronounc'd a Curse on every one that continu'd not in all things that are written in the Book of the Law, to do them: whereas our indulgent Father now considers our Infirmities, accepts our good Will where our Endeavours are not wanting, and will not withdraw his Kindness and Affection for any involuntary Miscarriages. *Like as a Father pitieth his own Children* (saith holy David) *even so the Lord pitieth them that fear him*, Psal. 103. 13. The Prophet Malachi brings in God Almighty declaring, *That he will remember them in the day that he maketh up his Jewels, and will spare them as a Man spareth his*

own Son that serveth him, Mal. 3. 17. which is a Mercy extended only to his own Children.

3dly, As we are the Children of God, we are intitul'd to his peculiar Care and Protection; for if earthly Parents *know how to give good Gifts to their Children, How much more will our heavenly Father give good things to them that ask them? Mat. 7. 11.*

God Almighty indeed exerciseth a general Providence over all his Creatures, whereby like the supreme Lord of the Universe, he makes Provision for the whole Family of Heaven and Earth; but he hath a more especial Care of the Household of Faith, and bears a more tender regard to his own Children. He that touches these, toucheth the Apple of his Eye: And, *Who shall harm you (saith the Apostle) if ye are followers of that which is good? 1 Pet. 3. 13. The Lions may lack and suffer hunger, but they that fear the Lord, shall want nothing that is good, Psal. 34. 10.* He may indeed find it necessary sometimes to correct his own Children, as a Father chasteneth a Son whom he loveth; but this is always for their good, to prevent their Wandrings, and make them more sensible of their Duty and Dependance on him.

In a word; God is pleas'd so to order Matters for them, that all things shall *work together for good to them that love him, who are the Called according to his purpose, Rom. 8. 28.* He takes this Course only to quicken their Grace, and to fit them for Glory, which is an Instance of the tender Love and Care he bears towards them as his own Children.

4thly, As we are the Children of God, we may have the freer access to him, and come with greater boldness to the Throne of Grace, for help in time of need. A Child, you know, may go freely to his Father for the supply of his Wants, and may ask with Confidence what is necessary and convenient for him. In like manner, we may address with boldness to our heavenly Father in all our Exigences, who is still ready to hear and help us when we call upon him; being adopted into his Family, we are part of his Care, and may freely acquaint him with all our Necessities. The Jews address'd to God rather as Servants than Sons, and accordingly worship'd him in a servile manner; if they had offended, they were to bring their Sacrifice to the Priest, who was to offer it for them, whilst they stood at a distance: But we have *a new and living way consecrated for us through the Blood of Jesus, by which we may enter freely into the holy place; and having such a High-Priest over the House of God, we may hence-*
forward

forward draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of Faith, having our Hearts sprinkled from an evil Conscience, Heb. 10. 19, 20, &c. Hence the Apostle declares, *That we have not receiv'd the Spirit of Bondage again to fear, but we have receiv'd the Spirit of Adoption, whereby we cry Abba Father*, Rom. 8. 15. meaning, that being no longer Servants, but Children, we may have free access; and if we come with the Duty of Sons, we cannot miss of the Bowels of a Father. And is not this a high and inestimable Privilege, to have the Liberty of approaching the Divine Majesty upon all Occasions, and to have our Requests so easily heard and answer'd in the Court of Heaven?

Certainly, this cannot but be thought so, by all that are sensible of their Wants, and their own Inability to supply them.

Lastly, As the Children of God, we are intituled to a glorious Inheritance in Heaven. The Inheritance of the Father, we know, is by Birth entail'd upon the Son: *And if Children, saith the Apostle, then Heirs*. But this must be discours'd of under the next Head, wherein we are said to be *Inheritors of the Kingdom of Heaven*; and therefore must be refer'd thither.

These are some of the many invaluable Benefits and Privileges that appertain to us as the Children of God: All which are promis'd and consign'd over to us in our Baptism, which is one of the Seals of the New Covenant, and that sacred Rite by which we are instated in the Privileges of the Gospel, and the Liberties of the Sons of God.

From this Discourse then, we may learn,

First, To admire and adore the infinite Goodness of God in admitting us thus into his Family, and receiving us into so near and dear a Relation to himself. St. John, like one astonish'd at the thoughts of it, cries out, *Behold! What manner of Love is this, that the Father hath bestow'd upon us, that we should be called the Sons of God!* 1 John 3. 1. And St. Paul, like one in a rapture, breaks forth, *O the height, and depth, and length, and breadth of this Love of God that passeth Knowledge!* Eph. 3. 18. Where the Apostle, in taking the Dimensions of the Divine Love, soon found himself at a loss, and was wholly swallow'd up in Amazement and Admiration. Indeed, that we who were not only Aliens, but Enemies, should receive the Adoption of Sons; and from Out-casts and Rebels be taken into his Bosom, and made the Darlings of his Care and Affections; is a Mercy too big for Words, and 'tis to be express'd only with Extasy and Wonder.

More-

Moreover, we learn hence what infinite reason we have to praise God for such a signal Instance of his Goodness, in taking us for his Children, and reckoning us in the number of his Sons. What can we do less than, upon all Occasions, magnify and extol such his infinite Condescension and Kindness? and likewise, with all possible Thankfulness, acknowledg our unspeakable Privilege and Dignity therein? This St. Paul teaches all Christians to do, Eph. 1. 3, 5. *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual Blessings in heavenly Places in Christ Jesus, having predestinated us in him to the Adoption of Children.*

Lastly, This vast Privilege of being made the Sons and Children of God, should teach us to live worthy of, and futable to, so high and noble a Relation.

The first and great Duty of a Child, is to love his Parents with a filial Affection: *We have had Fathers in the flesh, saith the Apostle, and we loved them, and gave them reverence.* This then, in the highest degree, is to be given to our heavenly Father, *loving him with all our heart, with all our soul, &c.*

Again, *A Son honoureth his Father, and a Servant his Master: If I then be a Father, where is my Honour? If a Master, where is my fear? saith the Lord of Hosts, Mal. 1. 6.* This Relation then must engage us to study and live to his Honour; *and whether we eat or drink, to do all to the praise and glory of God, 1 Cor. 10. 31.* This is no more than he expects and challenges from us.

Moreover, Children, you know, are to obey their Parents, to hearken to their Counsel, and kindly to receive their Admonitions and Corrections, and to amend upon them. This Obedience is in the highest measure to be paid to our Father in Heaven; for his Commandments are never grievous, and his Corrections are always for our good.

Lastly, Children are wont to trust and rely upon their Parents, to depend upon their Care and Provision for them; this we should do in a more eminent manner upon our heavenly Father, casting our care upon him who careth for us, and relying upon his Providence without Anxiety and Distrust. This Lesson our Saviour teaches, *Matth. 6.* where he wills us, not to be solicitous about Food and Rayment, because our heavenly Father knows that we have need of these things; and if we seek first his Kingdom, and the Righteousness thereof, he will not suffer us to want them, for they shall be added unto us: *Ver. the last.*

In a word, as we are the Children of God, we are to pray to him for all that we lack, and praise him for all that we receive ; and in so doing, we shall be heard and accepted in both.

DISCOURSE IX.

Rom. 8: 17. *If Children, then Heirs, Heirs of God, and Joint-heirs with Christ.*

I Discoursed the last time concerning the second Privilege promised and convey'd in Baptism, viz. our *Adoption*, in these words, *wherein I was made a Child of God*. Which I told you was a Privilege, which we have not by our Natural Birth; for we are born the Children of Wrath and Disobedience, a degenerate Race, a Seed of Evil-doers, and the corrupt Off-spring of Flesh and Blood ; but by the Water of Baptism, this Guilt and Pollution is washed off, and we are so purified, as to become the Sons and Children of God : Of which before. I come now to the

Third and last Privilege mention'd in our Catechism, and contain'd in those words, *wherein I was made an Inheritor of the Kingdom of Heaven*. This our Apostle here makes to be a Consequent of the former ; *For if Children, then Heirs, Heirs of God, and Joint-heirs with Christ*. From which, therefore, I shall discourse to you concerning the last and great Privilege: To which end I must enquire,

- I. What we are to understand here by the Kingdom of Heaven.
 - II. What it is to be an Inheritor of this Kingdom of Heaven.
 - III. How this Privilege is promised and conveyed in Baptism.
- For the

First, The Kingdom of Heaven is variously understood in the New Testament ; but 'tis chiefly used to signify, either the Kingdom of Grace here in this Life, or the Kingdom of Glory in the World to come.

By the Kingdom of Grace here, we are to understand the happy State of the Gospel, begun at Christ's coming into the World, and continued by preaching the glad Tidings and Means of Salva-

tion ever since; of this is to be understood that of *John* the Baptist, who gave the first notice of the Approach of it, saying, *Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand*, Mat. 3. 1. meaning the Kingdom of the *Messias*, or the State of the Gospel. Thus is it understood likewise in *Mat.* 11. 12. where the Kingdom of Heaven is said to *suffer violence*. And generally in all the Parables of our Saviour, where the Kingdom of Heaven is liken'd to various and sundry things, it is to be understood of this Gospel Dispensation, or the Kingdom of the *Messias*.

Now the Kingdom of Heaven, in this sense, being the same with the Christian Church, into which we are admitted by our Baptism, cannot be meant in this place of our Catechism, because this is included in the first Privilege, before treated of; by which we are made the Members of Christ, that is, of Christ's Church, and are thereby admitted to all the Grace and Favor of this Gospel Administration. But the being made *an Inheritor of the Kingdom of Heaven*, being mention'd here as a distinct Privilege, and indeed the top and completion of all the rest, must be understood of the Kingdom of Glory hereafter, which is that happy and glorious State of Saints and Angels with God in the World to come. In this sense we are to understand it, in all those Places where the Entrance into the Kingdom of Heaven, is promis'd as the Reward of the Righteous; and the Exclusion from it, is threaten'd as the Punishment of the Wicked, as *Mat.* 25. *1 Cor.* 6. So is it meant likewise in that of our Saviour, *Not every one that saith, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven; but he that doth the Will of my Father which is in Heaven*; Mat. 7. 21. That is, not they that barely profess Christianity, shall be admitted to a State of future and eternal Happiness; but they that practise and live accordingly. Indeed, the Profession alone is sufficient to gain admittance into the visible Church or Kingdom of Grace here on Earth; but nothing less than a futable Life and Practice can procure an Entrance into the Church Triumphant, or Kingdom of Glory hereafter in Heaven.

In this sense we are to take these Words in our Catechism, when we are said to be made Inheritors of the Kingdom of Heaven; namely, of a future State of eternal Bliss and Glory, a State of the greatest Joy and Blessedness that our Natures are capable of receiving; a State, in which all the Crowns, Kingdoms, and Glories of this World, fall vastly short of the Happiness of it; yea, are but Shadows and Trifles, if compared with it.

In

In a word, a State of that unspeakable Happiness, *that eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of Man to conceive the great Things that are prepared and to be enjoy'd in it.* This then is the Kingdom. But, .

Secondly, What is it to be an Inheritor of this Kingdom of Heaven? Why, in short, 'tis to be an Heir to it, as a Son is to the Inheritance of his Father: hence our Text tells us, *If Children, then Heirs, Heirs of God*; that is, he makes us Heirs to this Kingdom; *and Joint-Heirs with Christ*, his only Son, and our elder Brother. So that this is not like earthly Kingdoms and Inheritances, that go only to the elder Brother; no, God makes all his Children Heirs, and Joint-partakers of his heavenly Kingdom: *for if Children, then Heirs, &c.* and if a Son, *then an Heir thro Christ*, Gal. 4. 7. For which Reason all the People of God are stiled Heirs of Salvation, Heb. 1. 14. that is, 'tis secur'd to, and entail'd upon them. And our Catechism calls them Inheritors of the Kingdom of Heaven.

Now this shews us the Tenure by which we hold this heavenly Kingdom, which we are here, and frequently elsewhere, told in Scripture, is by Inheritance, which gives us the Title of Heirs; and in the last Sentence, we are bid *to inherit the Kingdom prepar'd for us*. Of all Tenures, you know, that of Inheritance is reckoned the best, because 'tis unlimited and perpetual; that which is held by Lease, expires; and that which is held by Lives, dies likewise and falls away: But what is held by Inheritance, or in Fee, is our own for ever. Now this is the Tenure by which we hold this heavenly Kingdom, to which we are Heirs, 'tis by Inheritance for ever; *Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom, &c.*

And as Inheritance is the best Tenure; so that of a Kingdom is the highest and best Inheritance. A small Cottage, or a little spot of Earth, may be held by Inheritance; but this is not to be named with the noble Inheritance of a Kingdom, which affords all that heart can wish. Again,

All that we hold of this World by Inheritance, must be left to our Heirs, because we cannot live always here to enjoy it; but the Kingdom of Heaven, of which we are made Inheritors, will be everlasting; and we shall always live our selves, and be happy in the Enjoyment of it: Hence St. Peter stiles it an *Inheritance immortal, incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, but reserved for ever in Heaven for us*, 1 Pet. 1. 4. And as the Inheri-

tance is incorruptible ; so he tell us, ver. 23, 24. *That we are born of an incorruptible Seed, and begotten again to a lively Hope of possessing and enjoying it for ever.*

Moreover, all earthly Inheritances may be forfeited or lost, they are liable to Violence, Rapine and Confiscation, with many other Disasters. Yea, all earthly Kingdoms may be shaken, the Crowns may be taken from the Heads of Princes, and their Honour laid in the Dust. Yea, we read of some who have voluntarily resign'd their Crowns, to be rid of the Cares, Fears, and Troubles that lay under them. Whereas this heavenly Kingdom, which Christians are made to inherit, is never to be lost or forfeited ; 'tis above the Violence, Malice, or Malignity of Enemies ; 'tis entirely free from all Fears and Cares, and out of the reach of all Misfortunes. *We receive a Kingdom, saith the Apostle, that cannot be moved,* Heb. 12. 28. a Kingdom that can neither be moved from us, nor we from it. This is indeed the principal Flower of this Crown of Glory, that it fadeth not away, but is eternal in the Heavens ; 'tis the chiefest Jewel in this heaven-Diadem, that 'tis everlasting, and suffers not Diminution or Decay ; we hold it by Inheritance for ever, and by a Right that shall never be taken from us. But how is this Inheritance convey'd to us in our Baptism, wherein (our Catechism tells us) we are made Inheritors of this *Kingdom of Heaven* ? This is the

Third thing propounded to be spoken to, which will lead us from the Tenure, to consider our Title to this heavenly Kingdom. For the better understanding whereof, we must note,

1. That we are not born to this Inheritance, and so can have no natural Right to it ; for we are all born in Sin, and come into the World Heirs of Hell and Damnation. That first Sin which shut our first Parents out of Paradise, had for ever excluded all their Posterity out of the *Kingdom of Heaven*, if some other way had not been found out for their Salvation. And therefore we must know,

2. That all the Right and Title we have or can pretend to this heavenly Kingdom, is deriv'd to us intirely thro the Mercy and Merits of Jesus Christ : For the Apostle tells us, *That we are Sons and Heirs only thro Christ,* Gal. 4. 7. and elsewhere, *Not by Works of Righteousness which we have done ; but according to his Mercy he saved us, by the washing of Regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost, which he shed on us abundantly thro Jesus Christ our*

Saviour; that being justify'd by his Grace, we should be made Heirs according to the Hope of eternal Life, Tit. 3. 5, 6, 7. So that we must know,

3. That by this means we have a firm and indefeasible Title to the Kingdom of Heaven; for as an Heir hath a legal Right and Claim to his Inheritance, so hath God vouchsafed to his Heirs thro Christ a legal Claim and Title to his *Kingdom in Heaven.*

But how come they by this Claim? Why, fundry ways; as

First, They have it by a Right of Purchase: not indeed their own, for they have nothing of value sufficient for such a Purchase; but our blessed Saviour's, whose Merits were sufficient, not only to atone for the Sins, but to procure the Happiness of all Mankind: for he laid down his Life, and gave himself a Ransom for all, 1 Tim. 2. 6. And shed his own precious and invaluable Blood, as the Price of their Redemption, 1 Pet. 1. 18, 19. By which means, we are bought with a Price out of the Hands of our Enemies, and Heaven is become our purchased Possession, Eph. 1. 14. Again,

Secondly, The Children of God may claim this Inheritance by a Right of Promise, it being made over to them by the Word, back'd with the Oath of God, for their greater Security: For so the Apostle tells us, *That God willing to shew to the Heirs of Promise the Immutability of his Counsel, confirm'd it by an Oath; that by two immutable things, wherein it was impossible for God to lie, they might have the stronger Assurance and Consolation,* Heb. 6. 17, 18.

Lastly, This Inheritance is made theirs by a Deed of Gift: for tho' it be purchased by Christ, and promis'd by our heavenly Father; yet, in respect of us, 'tis purely a Gift, who could neither merit nor effect it for our selves. *Fear not, little Flock, saith our Saviour, 'tis your Father's Pleasure to give you a Kingdom,* Luke 12. 32. All earthly Princes receive their Crowns from him; and all the Saints owe this 'Crown of Glory intirely to his Good-will and Pleasure.

Hence the Apostle stiles eternal Life the Gift of God, *Rom. 6. ult.* 'Twere Arrogance to ascribe this either to the merit of our Works, or the purchase of our own Industry, who can neither deserve or do any thing in proportion to it. *By Grace ye are sav'd, saith the same Apostle, not of your selves, it is the Gift of God,* Eph. 2. 8. *And not by Works of Righteousness which we have done, but by his Mercy he saved us, by the washing of Water, and renewing of the Holy Ghost,* Tit. 3. 5, 6.

Thus

Thus I have shewed you somewhat of the Glory of this Kingdom, the Title we have to it, and the Tenure we hold it by.

But still it may be ask'd, *How these great things are made over to us in Baptism? Are all that are baptis'd Partakers of these great Privileges?* No! For

Tho these great things are promised and tendered to all; yet this Promise is not absolute, but conditional; something is to be done on our part, to make us capable of them: Baptism is the Seal of the Covenant, in which these things are sign'd and seal'd on God's part, but some Duties and Conditions are required to be perform'd by us; without which we are never like to be the better for them, as will be shew'd hereafter. In the mean time we may learn hence,

First, the Sense and Truth of those Words of St. Peter, in the 1st Epist. chap. 3. ver. 21. *The like Figure whereunto, even Baptism, doth now also save us, not the putting away the filth of the Flesh, but the Answer of a good Conscience towards God.* Where the saving of Noah and his Family in the Ark from the common Deluge, is made a Type or Figure of that Salvation we now receive by Baptism: in both which there is a Salvation by Water, as well as from it; for the same Water that was the Destruction of some, was the Means of Salvation unto others, by bearing up the Ark that preserved them. And as they in the Ark were saved from perishing by Water; so we now in the Church, by the Waters of Baptism, are saved from everlasting Destruction.

Another Figure hereof, was the Children of Israel's passing thro the Red Sea; where the same Water that drown'd the Egyptians, became a Wall of Defence to the Israelites: signifying to us, that this Element, which hath been, and is to some, the Instrument of Destruction, is by consecrating of it to the holy Purposes of Baptism, become salutary to us, and the Means of our Salvation.

Moreover, the Apostle there tells us, what it is in Baptism that now saves us, and the manner how it becomes effectual to that end; which is not by the outward washing or putting away the Filth of the Flesh, but by the inward Purity of the Heart, represented there by the Answer of a good Conscience towards God.

Secondly, From what hath been said upon this Head, we learn the exceeding great Honour and Dignity that Christianity brings its Followers to: it makes them Heirs at present, and will shortly enter them into the Possession of a Kingdom; not an earthly Kingdom,

Kingdom, whose Glory soon fades and vanisheth away; but a never-failing Kingdom in Heaven, where a Scepter of Righteousness shall be put into their Hands, and a Crown of Glory fit for ever upon their Heads. *Now we are the Sons of God* (saith the Apostle) *but it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know, that when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is,* 1 John 3. 2. The Vision we shall then have of him, will not only transport, but transform us too, into the same Image: *And when he who is our Light shall appear, then shall we appear with him in Glory.*

Thirdly, From hence we learn farther, what a high Value we ought to set upon this sacred Rite of Baptism, which initiates us into all these Rights, and instates us in the glorious Liberty of the Sons of God: 'tis by this alone that we are receiv'd into the Ark of Christ's Church, and thereby kept from sinking into everlasting Perdition; by this we receive the Adoption of Children, and a Title to an everlasting Inheritance. And how can we have too high an Esteem for this holy Ordinance, that helps to invest us in all these noble and invaluable Privileges?

Fourthly, We learn from hence, not only the Excellency, but necessity of Baptism; for as we are thus highly favour'd by it, so we are miserable and undone without it. Baptism now saves us, by entring us into the Church, and making us Members of Christ's Body, whereby we derive Grace and Strength from him as our Head: but before and without this, we are out of the Church, and so out of the ordinary way of Salvation; being in the State of Heathens and Infidels, without God and without Christ, and so without Hope in the World. Our Saviour expressly tells us, *That except a Man be born again of Water and the Holy Ghost, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God,* John 3. 5. They that enter not by this Door into the Kingdom of Grace here, can never enter into the Kingdom of Glory hereafter. Wherefore,

Lastly, The Weight and Necessity of this Sacrament should carefully lead all Men to it, where it may be had; and caution every one against a wilful neglect of it. We read in the beginning of Christianity, how all Men flock'd to *John's* Baptism; how our Saviour dignify'd this Ordinance by submitting to it himself; and how all his Followers have been receiv'd this way to the Christian Church ever since. Yea, we find Christ himself declaring, that they who do not follow him in the Regeneration now, shall not follow him when he shall be reveal'd in his Glory at the last day.

Let all then that are unbaptiz'd no longer defer it, but come with all speed to this necessary and beneficial Ordinance; and let
all

all Parents take heed how they hazard the Salvation of their Children, by denying or delaying of it.

Thus I have done with the second Question and Answer in the Catechism, which contains those high and invaluable Blessings and Privileges promised and conferred on God's part in our Baptism, wherein we are made the *Members of Christ, the Children of God, and Inheritors of the Kingdom of Heaven.*

The next will lead us to the Duties or Conditions requir'd on our part to make us capable of them; of which hereafter.

DISCOURSE X.

James 4. latter part of the 7th Verse. *Resist the Devil, and he will fly from you.*

I Finished the last time the second Question and Answer in the Catechism, containing the inestimable Blessings and Privileges promised on God's part, and conferred in the Baptismal Covenant, *viz.* Church-Membership, Adoption, and a Right to the Inheritance of the Kingdom of Heaven: All which being severally treated of, I proceed now to the

Third Question and Answer in the Catechism, containing the Terms and Conditions of the New Covenant, required on our part, in order to our being made Partakers of those forementioned Privileges: For this Covenant (as I before hinted) is not absolute, but conditional; nor is Baptism alone sufficient to intitle us to the Mercies and Blessings promised in it, without the Answer of a good Conscience in discharging the Duties engaged in it. The

Third Question then is, *What did your Godfathers and Godmothers then for you?* To which the

Answer is, They promised and vowed three Things in my Name.

1st. That I should renounce the Devil and all his Works, the Poms and Vanities of this wicked World, and all the sinful Lusts of the Flesh.

2dly. That I should believe all the Articles of the Christian Faith.

3dly. That I should keep God's Holy Will and Commandments, and walk in the same all the Days of my Life.

Which words contain the Terms and Conditions of the Covenant required on our part, which are to be promis'd by the Adult in their own Persons, who are baptized in their riper Years; and for Children by their Sureties, who are baptized in their Infancy.

Now the Terms and Conditions are these three.

I. Repentance, expressed here by renouncing our Ghostly Enemies, the Devil, the World, and the Flesh.

II. Faith, expressed here by believing all the Articles of the Christian Faith.

III. Obedience, expressed here by keeping God's Holy Will and Commandments, and walking in the same all the days of our Life.

These things contain the whole of a Christian's Duty, and are sufficient to entitle us to all the Merits of Christ's Death and Satisfaction, and therefore must be particularly explain'd.

The First Condition then to be perform'd on our part of this Baptismal Covenant, is Repentance, expressed here by renouncing our three deadly and spiritual Enemies, viz. the Devil, the World, and the Flesh; from all which we engage in our Baptism to turn away, with the most resolute Defiance and Renunciation. For the better understanding whereof, I shall begin with the

First Enemy that is to be renounced, and that is the Devil: Of which I shall discourse at this time, from these words of St. James, *Resist the Devil, and he will fly from you.* Where we have a Precept, which is to *Resist the Devil*: and an Encouragement to it, because in so doing *he will fly from us.*

The Precept is, to *resist or renounce the Devil*, the grand Enemy of God and our Salvation, whom we solemnly promise and engage in our Baptism to forsake.

By the Devil here, we are to understand that Arch-Traitor or Rebel, who affecting to be like the most High, fell from his Duty and Allegiance to his Maker; and not only so, but drew the accursed Crew of Apostate Angels into the same Conspiracy. By this Revolt, they fell from their Integrity; and so leaving that

first Station of Light and Glory in which they were created, *are reserved in Chains of Darknes to the Judgment of the last Day.* This Arch-Rebel is in Scripture mentioned under fundry Names and Titles: sometimes he is called *Beelzebub*, the Prince of the Devils; sometimes *Satan*, for his Enmity both to God and Man; sometimes *a roaring Lion*, for his Rage and Cruelty; sometimes the *Old Serpent*, for his Craft and Subtilty; at other times he is called a *Dragon*, for his Fierceness and Contention; and most frequently *ὁ διάβολος*, the *Devil*, for his being a Calumniator or Accuser of the Brethren.

Now this Arch-Traitor, partly out of Enmity to God, and partly out of Envy to Man's Salvation, uses all his Art and Policy to deceive Mankind; and being fallen himself, seeks to draw them into the same Condemnation. To which end, he with his Legion of Infernal Spirits is daily solliciting them to Evil, and drawing them into a contempt of God and his Laws. He beguiled our first Parents even in Paradise, and robbed them both of their Innocence and Happiness together: and being encouraged with the Success of that Attempt, hath not failed to assault their Posterity ever since. Yea, we find that he had Impudence enough to set upon the Son of God himself, who we read was *led by the Spirit into the Wilderness, to be tempted of the Devil*, Mat. 4. 1. And tho our Blessed Saviour shamefully foiled and baffled him in all his Attempts; yet this restless Adversary ceases not still to molest and assault his Followers; and like a Lion, greedy of his Prey, is ever going to and fro *seeking whom he may devour*, 1 Pet. 5. 8.

This is the Devil, or that evil Spirit, which we are here, and in sundry places of Scripture commanded to resist.

But what are we to understand here by resisting or forsaking the Devil?

In Answer to which, Three things are plainly meant by it.

1st. The withstanding his usurp'd Power.

2^{dly}. The repelling of his Temptations.

And 3^{dly}. The renouncing of his Works.

All which being included in our Text, and engaged in our Baptism, must be particularly spoken to.

1st. To

1st. To resist the Devil, is to disclaim and withstand his usurp'd Power and Dominion: For Satan, both before and at the coming of Christ, had gotten a visible Kingdom, yea almost the universal Empire of the World; hence he is stiled *the Prince of this World, the Spirit that rules in the Children of Disobedience*, John 14. 30. *The whole World*, as St. John tells us, *at that time lay in Wickedness*; in the Original it is, *in that wicked One, who had gotten the Sway and Dominion of it*: Yea, we find him called *The God of this World*, 2 Cor. 4. 4. He had his Temples and his Altars; yea, and his Votaries too, who worship'd him with the most barbarous and bloody Sacrifices. *The things which the Gentiles sacrifice*, saith the Apostle, *they sacrifice unto Devils, and not unto God*, 1 Cor. 10. 20. He had many solemn Rites, pompous Plays and Processions instituted and performed in Honour of him. This was the State of the World, and the exorbitant Power the Devil had over it in the beginning of Christianity.

Now when any were converted from Paganism to the Christian Religion, the Primitive Christians expressly required from them a publick and open Renunciation, or Abjuration of the Devil; nor were any admitted into the Kingdom or Church of Christ, without an utter disowning and abandoning this his usurp'd Power and Authority. For which reason, the embracing Christianity is in Scripture called, *A turning from Darkness to Light, and from the Power of Satan unto God*, Acts 20. 18. This (as a Learned Catechist hath truly observ'd) is undoubtedly what the Primitive Church understood by renouncing the Devil, viz. The casting off all that Homage, Service and Obedience, that the Pagan World paid him, by worshipping of him or his wicked Angels, together with the rejecting of all those bloody Rites, leud Plays, and pompous Processions, that were made and observed in Honour of him. This likewise was the Sense of those Interrogatories that were put in Baptism, *Dost thou renounce the Devil?* &c. The Answer whereunto is, by St. Peter, stiled *The answer of a good Conscience towards God*. Which Interrogatories we find mentioned by *Tertullian*, and other Fathers; and are continued down in the Christian Church to this day.

And this is the first way of resisting the Devil, namely, by disclaiming all Subjection to Satan's Kingdom, and becoming the faithful Subjects, Servants and Soldiers of Jesus Christ.

2dly. To resist the Devil, is to resist all his Temptations. Among the other Titles given to this wicked One in Holy Scripture,

he is often stiled δ πειράζων, the Tempter; Mat. 4. 3. 1 Thess. 3. 5. it being his great Business to tempt and entice Men to Sin; and from his unwearied Diligence herein, he is said to be still walking about seeking whom he may devour.

Sometimes he tempts Men to presumption of God's Mercy, without using the Means appointed to the attaining it.

At other times he tempts them to despair, in the most diligent use of them. Sometimes he allures them into Evil, by the Smiles and Flatteries of the World: At other times he affrights them into it by the Frowns and Adversities of it. Sometimes again, he entices Men into Vice by the Baits of Pleasure, and inveigles them with the Softness and Blandishments of sensual Delights: At other times he discourages them from Vertue, by the Pains and Hardships that attend it. These and many other ways he hath to draw Men into Sin, and to get them into his Snare. He set upon our Saviour with many of them; and tho he was manfully repulsed by the Captain of our Salvation, yet he is daily trying the Strength and Constancy of his Followers ever since. But the various Wiles and Methods of Satan's Temptations, are so largely and learnedly laid open by Dr. Bray, in his tenth and following Lectures on the Catechism, that I shall not need to insist farther upon them, and therefore refer you to them.

Now to withstand the Force of these Temptations, so as not to yield or be drawn aside by them, and to repel the Danger and Importunity of them, is the second way that we are required and engaged to resist the Devil. The

Third is, to renounce or forsake the Works of the Devil. But these being so many, and so pernicious to the Peace of Christ's Kingdom, as well as the Welfare of our Souls, will require a particular Discourse of them, which shall be done in the next. In the mean time, let us see how we may be best enabled to withstand the Power, and resist the Force of Satan's Temptations. To which end St. Paul hath furnish'd Christians with Armour sufficient for this Warfare; the Weapons whereof he tells us, are not carnal, for we fight not with Flesh and Blood, but against Principalities and Powers, against the Rulers of the Darknes of this World, and against spiritual Wickednesses in high Places. So that the Armour fited to this Combat must be spiritual; And these, he tells us, will be mighty through God, to the pulling down of strong-holds, and every high thing that exalteth it self against the knowledge of God, and bringing into Captivity every thought to the Obedience of Christ, 2 Cor. 10.

Now the Armour prescribed by the Apostle for this purpose, is at large set forth in the 6th Chapter to the *Ephesians*; where the

First thing he wills us to put on, is the *Girdle of Truth*, ver. 14. *Having your Loins girt with Truth*; that is, with *Knowledge* and *sound Religion*, by which, as by the military Belt or Girdle, all Divine Truths are tied and fastened on the Mind; expressed elsewhere, by *girding up the Loins of the Mind*, which will keep the Soul from running into Licentiousness, as a Girdle restrains and keeps in the Body.

Secondly, The next piece of Armour he directs us to put on, is the *Breast-plate of Righteousness*; by which is meant, that Integrity of Heart that is to accompany our Knowledge, without which we are not able to stand in the evil Day: for 'tis this Purity of Heart and Mind that guards us from the Wiles of Satan, as a Breast-plate does from the Darts of an Enemy.

Thirdly, Another thing we are to take care of, is to have our Feet shod with the Preparation of the Gospel of Peace; which signifies our Readiness to do the Will of God, and run the Paths of his Commandments: for the putting on of Shoos, implies Readiness and Activity; and denotes the Alacrity and Chearfulness of our Obedience.

Fourthly, Another principal part of this Armour, is the Shield of Faith, ver. 16. *Above all things taking on the Shield of Faith, wherewith we shall be able to quench all the fiery Darts of the Wicked*. Now by this is meant a firm and stedfast Belief, both of the Promises made to penitent Sinners, and the Threats denounced against all wilful and impenitent Offenders; which may serve as a Shield to keep off all the fiery Darts of Satan.

Fifthly, The next piece of Armour we are bid to put on, is the Helmet of Salvation, ver. 17. by which is meant the Hope of Salvation. A Helmet serves to defend the Head, as the other Armour does the Body from the Blows of an Assailant; in like manner this Hope of Salvation secures the Soul from the most violent Assaults of our Ghostly Enemies. 'Tis sometimes stiled the Anchor of the Soul, both sure and stedfast, that holds it steddy in a Storm, and keeps it from fluctuating in the greatest Tempest.

Sixthly, The next piece of this Armour we are to make use of, is the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, ver. 18. This cuts through the greatest Difficulties, and confounds all the Enemies

Enemies of the Truth. This Weapon our Saviour made use of in his Conflict with the Devil; alledging on all occasions the Word of God, and baffling all his Temptations with, *It is written*, Mat. 4. For which reason the Apostle stiles it, *A two-edged Sword, quick and powerful, dividing asunder between the Joints and the Marrow, the Soul and the Spirit; and is a Discerner of the thoughts and intentions of the Heart*, Heb. 4. 11.

Lastly, To all this the Apostle adds Prayer, to compleat the Armour, and to render it successful, ver. 18. *Praying always with all Prayer and Supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all Perseverance*. 'Tis Prayer that gives all the force and efficacy to our Endeavours, for this calls in the Aid and Assistance of Heaven to our Relief; and if God be for us, who can be against us?

This is a brief account of the *Panoply*, or whole *Armour of God*, which the Apostle exhorts all Christians to put on, that they may be able to withstand the evil One, and to stand too in the Evil-day.

But what Encouragement have we thus to resist the Power and Temptations of the *Devil*? The Answer to this will bring me to the

Last particular of our Text, which gives us abundant Encouragement to engage in this Combat, from a well-grounded assurance of Success and Victory; for *if we resist the Devil, he will fly from us*. We are not bid to encounter an Enemy that we cannot conquer; nor left to the hazard of a Battel, in which we may be foil'd and vanquish'd: No, we are bid only to resist a conquer'd Foe; and if we manfully withstand him, we shall be *more than Conquerors through Christ that loveth us; for he hath already subdued the Power, and vanquish'd the Forces of the Devil; he hath dethroned the Prince of Darknes, and destroyed his Kingdom*. So that you need not doubt the Issue of your Encounter; your Adversary's Forces are broken and routed; and if you set yourselves in good earnest to resist him, he will fly from you; 'tis but to keep your Ground, and you may be sure to win the Field: let Satan be never so crafty or formidable a Foe, if you do not cowardly consent or yield to him, his utmost Rage and Subtilty, nay his greatest Malice and Cruelty, shall not do you any harm; for if you do not too easily surrender, you shall upon request be supplied with that Assistance from above, which shall not only enable you to hold out, but secure you from the danger of all his

his Attempts. And now I think I may well enough renew the Apostle's Advice, and exhort you (as you have engaged) to resist or renounce the *Devil*, against whom you are sufficiently armed, not only with the knowledg of his Devices, but likewise with power and strength enough to overcome them.

To which end, let me counsel you, not to listen to any of the Temptations of the Devil, but to resist and suppress the first motions of them: do not admit a Parly with the Tempter, for he is a cunning and sly Adversary; he prevailed upon our first Parents in their Innocency, and hath improv'd his Craft in deceiving, by a long exercise and experience ever since. And therefore do not give way to him, but check the very beginnings of his Assault, and give him no encouragement to renew his Attempt; but say with our Saviour (who was much better able to resist him than we are) *Get thee behind me Satan.*

And the better to enable you to make this Resistance, you must frequently implore the divine Assistance by diligent Prayer: for we are too weak of our selves to withstand so powerful an Enemy, but the Grace of God will be sufficient for us; and tho we can do nothing of our selves, yet we may with *St. Paul*, do all things through Christ that strengthens us, whose Grace and Favour therefore we should not only pray for, but chiefly rely upon.

DISCOURSE XI.

1 John 3. 8. *For this purpose was the Son of God manifested, that he might destroy the Works of the Devil.*

I Began the last time with that part of the Baptismal Covenant which concerns the baptized Party, who is thereby required and engaged,

First, Solemnly to renounce and abjure the Three great Enemies of God and our own Souls, *viz.* The Devil, the World, and the Flesh.

I have made some entrance on our Renunciation of the

First of these, from those words of *St. James*, *Resist the Devil and he will fly from you*; where I mention'd Three ways of resisting him, *viz.*

First,

First, By withstanding his usurped Power and Dominion?
 Secondly, By rejecting his Temptations. And,
 Thirdly, By renouncing his Works.

Of the Two first I treated in the last Exercise; in which I gave you some Encouragements and Directions, the better to excite and enable you to both.

It remains now, that I proceed to the

Third way of resisting him; which is, by renouncing the Works of the Devil: Of which I shall discourse from these words of St. John, *For this purpose was the Son of God manifested, that he might destroy the Works of the Devil.*

I shewed the last time, how our Saviour was manifested to destroy the Power of the Devil. For, at his coming into the World, the whole World lay in Wickedness; Vices had their Temples and their Votaries too; evil Spirits had gotten possession of the Minds and Bodies of Men; and by their false and feigned Oracles, for a long time commanded and beguiled the World: we read, that they made their very Children to pass thro the Fire to *Molock*, and sacrificed their Sons and Daughters unto Devils. Yea, so far had Satan deceived Mankind, that he made them to worship their very Sickneses and Diseases; and Men became Idolaters to their own Infirmities. But Christ, who was that Seed of the Woman that was to bruise the Serpent's Head, divested Satan of this Power; he cast out Devils, and dispossessed whole Legions of evil Spirits; he spoiled Principalities and Powers, and threw down spiritual Wickednesses from their high Places, making a Shew of them openly on the Cross, and triumphing over them in it, *Col. 2. 15.* Hence we read how *Michael* and his Angels fought with the Dragon and his Angels; which was Christ's dispossessing and driving out Satan: and the Issue of the Combat was, that he *beheld Satan like Lightning fall from Heaven*, *Luke 10. 18.* And the Author to the *Hebrews* declares, *That Christ destroyed him that had the Power of Death, which is the Devil*, *Heb. 2. 14.* By all which it appears, that the Son of God was manifested to dissolve the Kingdom of Darkness, to destroy the Power of Satan, and to rescue Mankind from that vile Bondage and Slavery that they were in to him.

Now St. John adds here a farther end of his Manifestation, which was not only to subdue the Power, but to destroy the
 Works

Works of the Devil. And this he did, not only in his own Person, and by his own Power, but by the Assistance of his Grace, in the Person of all his Followers; who are thereby enabled, not only to abandon their evil Deeds, but to become a peculiar People, zealous of good Works. For the better clearing whereof, I must enquire,

First, What is here meant by the Works of the Devil?

Secondly, How the Son of God is said to have destroyed them? And,

Lastly, Conclude with an Exhortation and Encouragement to renounce them.

For the 1st, All Sin in general may be justly stiled the Works of the Devil; for the *Devil sinneth from the beginning*, saith St. *John*, and *whosoever committeth Sin is of the Devil*.

He was the first Author, and is still the Instigator to all manner of Wickedness, which may be therefore truly reckon'd to be his Works. All Sin is a disowning the Authority of God, and a throwing off Obedience to his Laws; of which the Devil giving the first Instance, and still continuing to draw in others to do likewise, all such Practices may be intitled to him; and they that do so, may be justly said to do the Works of the Devil.

But there are some particular Sins, that more especially owe their beginning to this evil Spirit, and carry the more particular Marks and Lineaments of their Father the Devil; which are therefore more especially to be forsaken and renounced by us.

I shall mention some of the chief of them, that you may the better know what is meant and promised by *Renouncing the Devil and all his Works*. And,

First, Idolatry of all sorts, which is giving the Honour due to God, to any Creature, is a Work of the Devil. This we find invaded and usurped by this grand Apostate, who not only arrogated the Divine Honour and Worship to himself, but was likewise the Author of all the Pagan Idolatries. He tempted our blessed Saviour with the promise of the Kingdoms and Glories of the World, to fall down and worship him; which our Saviour repelled with that express Command of the divine Majesty, *Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve*, Mat. 4. 10. Hereby the Son of God destroyed this Work of the Devil, and hath given us both a Precept and Precedent to renounce it.

2dly, All recourse to Witches, Wizards or Fortune-tellers, about the Loss, Fortunes, or Recovery of any Persons or Things; and likewise, the making use of Spells, Charms, or Enchantments to those Ends, is a Work of the Devil. The Knowledg and Disposal of future contingent Things, is the incommunicable Property of God, who challenges this as his Prerogative, and upbraids the Idols of the Heathens for lack of it; *Let them shew Things to come.* So that to ascribe this to Conjurers, Charmers, Necromancers, or the like; or to betake our selves to them for any Discovery, Help or Assistance in these things, is to rob God of the Honour of his Attributes, and to give his Glory to another. Yea, this strikes directly at the Authority of our Maker, and invades his Sovereignty, which is the Work and Business of evil Spirits; and by seeking to them, we comply with their Designs, and set up Satan's Kingdom against Christ's, which is a manifest breach of this part of our Vow. To prevent which, read the strict Charge given by God Almighty in this matter, *Deut. 18. 10, 11, 12, 13, 14.* where this Sin is condemned as a diabolical Invention, and an Abomination to the Lord; and is therefore to be renounced as one of the Works of the Devil.

3dly, Pride is another Work of the Devil to be renounced by us: This is supposed to be the first Sin of those evil Angels, and the occasion of their Fall; for affecting to be equal, if not superior to the most High, they were for their Pride cast down from those blessed Mansions of Light and Glory in which they were first seated, into the black Abyss of eternal Darknes. And this shews us the evil and danger of this Sin, which is the great cause of all the misery, trouble and disturbances of the World: and likewise how much we are concern'd to avoid this loftiness and elation of Mind, lest being lifted up with Pride, *we fall into the condemnation of the Devil.*

4thly, Envy is the Work of the Devil, which we are engaged to renounce; this is an evil Eye at anothers Prosperity: Accordingly these apostate Spirits, being uneasy at the Happiness of Mankind, fought by all ways to work their Ruin; and being fallen themselves, labour'd to draw them into the same Condemnation. This Temper made them indeed Devils, and where 'tis found 'tis truly diabolical: which should teach us by all means to mortify and renounce it; and instead of it, to endeavour to be like God, in all the ways of Beneficence and Charity.

*

5thly,

5thly, Lying is another Work of the Devil that we are to renounce: *When he speaketh a Lye* (saith the Apostle) *he speaketh of himself; for he is a Liar from the beginning, and the Father of it,* John 8. 44. He deceived our first Parents with a Lye; *Ye shall not surely die* (saith he) when God had told them they should; yea he made them believe they should be like Gods, by doing that which made them like Devils: thus did he ruin Mankind at first with a Lye, and hath continued to beguile the World ever since with his Lyes and Impostures. This should warn all Christians to abhor this evil Practice of Lying, which makes them not the Children of God, but to be of their Father the Devil. But especially they should avoid that sort of it, that consists in slandering and false-accusing, which makes them most nearly resemble him, who is therefore called ὁ διάβολος, *The Calumniator or Accuser of the Brethren*, Rev. 12. 10.

Lastly, to tempt or draw any into Sin is a Work of the Devil, and such a one too as carries a more especial Character or Stamp of Satan upon it, for he is stil'd the *Tempter*; and they that any way sollicite or importune others into any kind of Sin are of their Father the Devil, and imitate him in his prime Work and Business, which is to go up and down *seeking whom he may devour*.

In a word, all such as delight themselves in the love or practice of any known Sin, or draw others into it, are the Imps of Satan, and do the Works of the Devil.

But how hath the Son of God destroyed the Works of the Devil? Or what kind of Victory hath he given us over them?

In answer to which, I say, That he hath not at present so far destroyed them, as to root out the very Being of Sin, or totally free us from the Assaults and Temptations of Satan: No, this is reserved for the happiness and perfection of our future State. But he has broken their Power, and vanquish'd the Dominion of them; insomuch, that *Sin shall not reign in our mortal Bodies*, nor force us to *obey it in the Lusts thereof*: and tho Satan may tempt us, yet without our own Consent he cannot prevail or overcome us.

And this Victory we have gained over them; not by any natural Strength or Ability of our own, but wholly by the Efficacy and Assistance of divine Grace: for tho our own Power be too weak, yet his Grace is sufficient for us; the Son of God having instructed us in the Wiles, and by the gracious Aid of his holy Spirit, fortified us against the Works of the Devil.

And now we may see what Encouragement we have to *renounce the Devil and all his Works*, since his Power is vanquish'd, and his Works are all destroyed for us. To which may be added,

First, That this is no more than what we have all solemnly vow'd and promised to do, having disclaimed Satan, and bid an open defiance to all his Works. And if we consider the time when this was done, together with the manner of doing it, you will easily see the strength and firmness of this Obligation; 'twas at the time of our Admission into the Church, and entrance upon Christianity; 'twas when we lifted our selves in Christ's Service, giving up our Names to him, and taking his upon us; then it was that we disclaimed this deadly Foe, entring into a holy War against him, and promising our Saviour to be faithful and constant in his Service: And can any thing import us more than to answer such a solemn Engagement? Must it not be a shameful thing for us now to be found working the Works of Satan, and forsaking Christ, to whom we have promised all Fidelity? What is this, but to desert the Captain of our Salvation, and basely fly to the Enemy we have renounced? than which nothing can be more perfidious. Again,

Secondly, Our Text expressly declares the great end of Christ's coming into the World, to be the destruction of Satan's Kingdom: *For this purpose was the Son of God manifested, that he might destroy the Works of the Devil.* Yea, this was the end not only of his Life, but his Death too; *for he gave himself, saith the Apostle, to redeem us from all Iniquity, and to purify to himself a peculiar People, zealous of good Works,* Tit. 2. 13. And is it fit, think you, to disappoint the Saviour of the World in the main end of his coming into it? and to defeat the designs of his good-will and kindness unto Mankind? Shall we give up our selves to the rage and cruelty of that roaring Lion which he came on purpose to destroy, and yield our selves willing Bondslaves to the Enemies from which he came to rescue and deliver us? This is to make the Son of God live and die for us to no purpose; and to say in effect with those in the Gospel, *We will not have this Man to reign over us.* This is the Sense and Language of all such as so readily hearken to Satan's Temptations, and are so easily misled by them; they renounce their own Vows, instead of the Devil's Works; and leaving their best Friend, chuse rather to adhere to the worst and vilest of all Enemies. But farther to encourage you to mind your Promise of *renouncing the Devil and all his Works*; consider,

*

Thirdly,

Thirdly, The great Benefit that will accrue to you by this solemn Abjuration; for hereby you are translated from the Power of Satan unto God, you become the Subjects of Christ's Kingdom, and are intituled to all the Glories and Privileges of it: He is become the Author of eternal Salvation to all those that obey him, *Heb. 6.* This gives you an Interest in the Merits of Christ's Death and Satisfaction, and in all the Happiness obtain'd and purchas'd by them: Infomuch, that by renouncing the Devil, you rescue your selves from his Power and Malice; and by adhering to Christ, you are made Partakers of all the Promises and Blessings of his Incarnation. Whereas,

Fourthly, The danger of not observing our Promise to forsake the Devil and all his Works, is very great and unexpressible; for hereby we forfeit all the Benefits and Privileges of our Baptism: instead of being made Members of Christ, we continue Slaves to the Devil; instead of being Children of God, we are the Brats and Instruments of Satan; and instead of Inheritors of the Kingdom of Heaven, are only Heirs of Hell and Damnation.

What the Apostle told the Jews concerning Circumcision, may be fitly apply'd to Christians touching their Baptism: *For Circumcision, saith he, verily profiteth, if thou be a Keeper of the Law; otherwise, thy Circumcision is become Uncircumcision.* In like manner, Baptism indeed profiteth much, if thou observe the Promise made in it; otherwise, if thou break it, thy Baptism is no better than Heathenism: unless we perform our part of the New Covenant, Baptism will avail us nothing, but will leave us still in the natural and forlorn Condition of Infidels: without forsaking Sin and Satan, we shall remain under the Power of both, and so can have no Benefit by any thing that Christ did or suffer'd for us; 'twill be in vain to alledg, at the last day, that we have been baptiz'd, or have prophesy'd in his Name; if we have not renounc'd the Works of the Devil, we shall be bid to depart, *as Workers of Iniquity, into the Place of Torment prepared for the Devil and his Angels.*

What remains then, but that we may learn from hence, to set our selves against this first and grand Enemy of our Souls; that as the Son of God was manifested to destroy the Works of the Devil, so we manifest our duty to him, by an utter disclaiming and forsaking of them. Hereunto we stand oblig'd in point of Justice, being under a solemn Vow and Promise so to do,

do, and we must be false and unjust if we do otherwise. Beside, we are bound to it in point of Gratitude, our blessed Saviour having subdu'd Satan under our Feet, and thereby translated us from a State of Bondage into the *glorious Liberty of the Sons of God*. Finally,

We are engag'd to it in point of Interest, all the Mercies and Privileges of our Baptism being suspended upon this Condition; insomuch, that the Waters of Baptism will save us, if they drown our Sins, and bury in them the Works of the Devil; otherwise, they will serve only to sink us into the deeper Perdition.

But how are we to renounce the Devil and all his Works? I shall add a word to this, and conclude. To which end, you must know, that these things being absolutely and entirely Evil, are to be totally and thorowly renounc'd by us; we must not cherish any reserve of Love or Kindness to any one Sin, but must universally abhor and abandon all the kinds and degrees of it. The World and the Flesh have a mixture of something that is good and lawful in them, and so may have some moderate degrees of Affection and Regard allow'd to them. But the Devil is that wicked One, that hath all Evil in himself, and is the cause of all Evil in others, and therefore is to be absolutely and entirely renounc'd by all that love God, or wish well to their own Souls; for there is *no Concord between Christ and Belial; we cannot serve two Masters*: if we do not renounce the Devil and all his Works, we must renounce Christ and all his Ways. And then what can be expected, but that he will renounce and disown us at the last day?

Thus I have spoken to the first Enemy we are oblig'd by our Baptism to renounce, and that is the Devil; to which we have abundant Encouragement both from St. James, who tells us, *That if we resist him, he will fly from us*; and from St. John, who declares, *That the Son of God appear'd on purpose to destroy the Works of the Devil*.

DISCOURSE XII.

I John 2. 15. *Love not the World, nor the things that are in the World; if any Man love the World, the Love of the Father is not in him.*

I Treated, in the two last Discourses, of the first and grand Enemy which by our Baptismal Vow we stand engaged to renounce, and that is, *The Devil and all his Works*. I come now to the II. And that is, *The World, with all the Poms and Vanities thereof*: Of which I shall discourse to you from these Words of St. John, *Love not the World, nor the things of the World, &c.* In the Verses immediately foregoing, he declares his writing both to Fathers and young Men was, because they had overcome the wicked one, meaning that they had gotten some Ground upon their first Enemy the Devil, and had in a great measure vanquished Satan: from thence he proceeds here, in the Words of my Text, to set them against the

Second, and to arm them against the Temptations of the World. In speaking therefore hereunto, I must enquire,

First, What is meant by the World, which we are bid here not to love.

Secondly, What by the things that are in the World, which we are requir'd to renounce.

Thirdly, What we are to understand by the not loving or renouncing of them.

Fourthly, I must speak to the Reason here given, taken from the Inconsistency of the Love of the World with the Love of God; *If any Man love the World, the Love of the Father is not in him.* For the

First, The World is sometimes taken for the whole Frame of Nature which we behold, or the glorious Fabrick of Heaven and Earth, with all the Variety of Creatures contain'd in it: in this sense, the World is the Workmanship of God, and is rather to be admired than renounc'd by us; for God saw *that every thing he had made was very good*, Gen. 1. 31. David made this the Subject of his daily Meditation, and hath taught us to set forth the Praise

Praise and Glory of our Creator, and to celebrate the infinite Power, Wisdom and Goodness, that shine so brightly in all the Works of his Hand: to renounce the World in this sense, would be to despise the Workmanship of our Maker, and to disparage the Operations of his Hand.

2. The World is sometimes taken for evil Men, which make up the greatest part of it; for which reason 'tis called the wicked World, because it directly opposes God's Glory and our own Happiness; so 'tis taken *John 7. 7.* and in sundry other places. *St. James* stiles the Friendship of the World, Enmity with God, *James 4. 4.* In this sense, to renounce the World, is to cast off all Intimacy and Familiarity with the wicked part of it, *Not to company with Fornicators*, as the Apostle exhorts; *or if any be an Idolater or Rauler, a Drunkard or an Extortioner, with such a one no not to eat*, *1 Cor. 5. 11.* Not that we are always to disclaim or refuse the company of wicked Men, for then (as the same Apostle tells us) *we must go out of the World*, or retire into Deserts and Solitudes, which would be to fly from the Enemy that we are bid to conquer: but we are not to accompany them in their Sins, nor to contract any unnecessary Intimacy, so as to become Brethren and Companions with them in Iniquity; but to chuse rather to walk in the solitary Paths of Vertue and Religion, than to follow a Multitude to do Evil, or be carry'd away with the Stream of their evil Example.

3. The World is sometimes taken for the sinful Customs, and vile Practices of the World: In this sense is that of the Apostle, *Be not conformed to this World*, *Rom. 12. 2.* which forbids all Compliance or Conformity with the Vices and Wickedness of Men. Indeed the Heathen World (against which this part of the Vow was particularly directed) had many vile and barbarous Customs, some against the very Light of Nature and Reason; others against the written Law and Word of God: both which prevail'd so far at that time, that *St. John* tells us, *the whole World lay in Wickedness*. Now against these was this Vow chiefly fram'd, which requires all Christians to renounce all the leud and barbarous Customs of the wicked World.

So that whatever Countenance or Encouragement Sin may at any time have, either by the Connivance of Authority, the Temptations of Company, or the Examples of great Men, yet still we are to disclaim and abandon it, *having no Fellowship with the unfruitful Works of Darkeness, but rather reprove them.*

This,

This, in short, is that World, which the Apostle wills us not to love; and our Catechism here solemnly and resolutely to renounce.

But *Secondly*, what are the *Things of the World*, which the Apostle would have excluded likewise out of our Affections? *Love not the World, nor the things of the World*; which being mention'd apart from the former, must be particularly consider'd.

These our Catechism stiles *the Poms and Vanities of the World*; and by which we are to understand in general, all the Gaieties and glittering Shows of the World, that are apt to dazzle the Eyes, and draw away the Hearts of Men from better things.

More particularly, the Poms and Vanities here at first pointed at, were those gay Shows made by the Heathens in their Triumphs and Games: these we find peculiarly called *Poms*, and being many of them us'd as sacred Rites, in Honour of their Deities, were likewise justly stil'd *Vanities*; both which the Christians, upon their embracing of Christianity, were requir'd to renounce as the Marks and Badges of Heathenism. Moreover,

All that Luxury and various kind of Excesses, that were wont to accompany those Seasons of Jollity and Festivity, come under the Character of *the Poms and Vanities of the World*.

Again, All that ostentatious Bravery or Gallantry of Attire, that was us'd to adorn their Triumphs, and draw the Admiration of vain Men, fell under the same Character, and were to be renounc'd, as *the Poms and Vanities of this wicked World*.

In a word, All glittering Shows or Appearances, that administer to Pride or the inflaming of Lust, are to be reckon'd among these Poms and Vanities, and are by this part of our Baptismal Vow renounc'd by all Christians.

But St. John, in the next Verse to our Text, has summ'd up all the things that are in the World under three Heads.

1. The Wealth and Riches of the World, call'd *the Lust of the Eye*; because all that is above our necessary use, is only the beholding of it with the Eye.

2. The Pleasures and Delights of the World, call'd *the Lusts of the Flesh*, because they serve only to gratify the carnal or sensual part.

3. The Honours and Glories of the World, stil'd *the Pride of Life*, because they are apt to swell and puff Men up with Pride.

Thirdly, This being the Inventory of this World's Goods, it will be requisite to know how we are to use, and how to renounce them; for we are not debar'd all use of this World, but are only bid so to use, as not to abuse it, or our selves by it. To which end you must know,

1. That Wealth and Riches not being in themselves Evil, are not absolutely to be renounc'd; but contrariwise, being the Blessings of God, and affording great Advantages of doing good, both to our selves and others, are to be thankfully receiv'd and us'd by us. We are not required to vow Poverty, or disdainfully to reject the Favours of Heaven: No, *'Tis the Blessing of God* (says Solomon) *that maketh rich*, and brings no Trouble with it; yea, by using well the Substance which God giveth us, it will multiply into a greater Treasure in Heaven, and lead to a far more enduring Substance. Then,

2. For the Pleasures of the World. These likewise in their lawful Use afford great Benefit and Comfort to Mankind, and so are not absolutely to be renounc'd: they serve to refresh our Spirits, to quicken us in our Duty, and to lighten the Burden of our Cares and Troubles. God Almighty has planted in us natural Appetites and Desires, and likewise given suitable Objects for their Gratification: Neither has he restrain'd us from a free and cheerful Use of them. Religion does not will us to hang down our Heads like a Bul-rush, nor doom us to an absurd and perpetual Melancholy: No, 'tis so far from abridging, that it heightens and encreases our Pleasures; *Her ways are ways of Pleasantness, and all her Paths are Peace.*

3. For the Honors and Glories of the World. These two are of great use, and serve many times to excellent Purposes; for they excite to Vertue, and are a Spur to great and noble Undertakings. Honour is a necessary ingredient and attendant upon Power, for it makes Men bear the Burden, and discharge the Business of their Places with greater Ease and Diligence; and likewise strikes those with greater Awe and Reverence, that are subject to their Authority.

So that these Things being not Evil, but Good in themselves, and tending to many useful Purposes, are not absolutely to be renounc'd by us; we may not think that God Almighty has fill'd the World only with Trifles, that are good for nothing but to be despis'd and tramp'd on; this were to libel our Maker, and not only to vilify his Blessings, but to destroy the Encouragements of Industry and Vertue.

But

But how then are we to understand this Caution of the Apostle, against *loving the World, or the Things that are in it*? In answer to which, I say,

1. That this does not condemn all moderate and subordinate Love to earthly Objects, for we are bid to love our Friends and Relations, and he that *hateth Father and Mother, shall die the Death.*

Neither does it forbid all regular Desires and Endeavours after the good things of this Life, but only moderate our Affections towards them. We are not hereby taught to cast off all due care and concern for worldly Things, or to abandon our selves to Idleness and a careless Neglect of them; for the Apostle wills to *provide things honest in the sight of all Men*, Rom. 12. and he that provides not for his own House and Family, *has denied the Faith, and is worse than an Infidel.* So that this Caution in the Text is not design'd to root out, but to regulate our Love to these things. And therefore,

2. Both our Text and Catechism will us to renounce all inordinate Love of the World, and the things of it, so as not to be inveigled by them; we must not love any thing in opposition to, or in competition with the Love of God: He that *loves Father or Mother more than me* (says Christ) *is not worthy of me.* More particularly,

We are to renounce the inordinate Love of Riches, so as not to betake our selves to any indirect means to get them. The Apostle speaks of some that *will be rich*, they care not how, whether by Robbery or Oppression, or Fraud, or any other unjust ways of Gain; and these, he tells us, *fall into Temptations and a Snare, and into many foolish and hurtful Lusts, which drown them in Destruction and Perdition*, 1 Tim. 6. 9.

Again, We are not to desire or use Riches to any bad Ends; as, to gratify our Lusts, or to support Luxury and Intemperance: this is to turn the Blessings of God against himself, and to make the Instances of his Bounty become the Instruments of his Dishonour.

Neither are we to put our *Trust in uncertain Riches*, as too many do, who make it their Refuge and their strong Tower, relying more on their Wealth than on the All-sufficient God.

Nor lastly, Are we to dote so much upon the Wealth of this World, as to be unwilling to part with it, either by Acts of Charity, or Resignation of it at God's Call, or in his Cause. These

are all Instances of an inordinate Love of Riches, which our Baptismal Vow engages us to renounce.

Then for the Pleasures of the World: we are utterly to renounce all unlawful Pleasures, and likewise all immoderate Use of lawful ones, not suffering them to engross too much of our Time and Affections, which Religion requires should be laid out upon better and weightier Matters.

Lastly, For the Honours, Titles, and Glories of the World: These are to be renounc'd likewise, as the Pumps and Vanities of it; that is, we must not have too high a Value for them, nor value our selves too much upon them: being only vain, transitory, and uncertain things, that add no intrinsic worth to any Man's Person, and depend only upon the fickle inconstant Breath of other Men, we are not vainly to affect, or be ambitious of them, and much less to be lifted up with Pride by reason of them, or to look down with Scorn and Contempt on those that are beneath us: when it comes to this, they are Vanities indeed, and justly deserve to be renounc'd by all good Christians. Thus having shew'd what is meant by *not loving the World, or the Things of it*, I proceed,

Fourthly, to the Reason here annex'd, taken from the Inconsistency of it with the Love of God, from these words, *If any Man love the World, the Love of the Father is not in him*. The Force of this Reason is taken from these words of our Saviour, *No Man can serve two Masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will hold to the one and despise the other; ye cannot serve God and Mammon*, Mat. 6. 24. Where the Commands of two Masters are contrary and inconsistent (as 'tis in the present Case) 'tis impossible to serve both. The Service of Mammon requires us to addict our Hearts and Affections to this World; the Service of God calls them off, and would have them fix'd on a better: Now here we must either renounce God or Mammon, Christ or the World; for if we stick to the one, we must forsake the other; their ways are so different, that none can follow both.

Now here, if we would consult the great Rule of Reason and Religion, there could be no difficulty in determining our Choice; for that wills, that the chiefest Good should have our chiefest Esteem and our choicest Affections: Now God being our supreme and chiefest Good, and the eternal Glories of the next World infinitely surpassing the perishing Trifles of this, no wise Man can be at a loss which way to incline.

Chuse

Chuse then, my Brethren, whom you will follow, God or Mammon, Christ or the World: you cannot, you see, serve both; and tho the odds be vastly great, yet you must renounce the one or the other.

But why should I press this? You that are baptiz'd have already made your Choice, for you therein promis'd to forsake the *World*, and continue *Christ's faithful Servants to your Lives end*; and you must be, not only fickle, but false or unfaithful, if you hearken to Satan's Temptations, or be led away by the Vanities and Allurements of the World. Wherefore, to draw to a Conclusion, Let me advise you not to love the World, or the Things of it, but manfully to resist and renounce both. To this end consider,

That the World is a very tempting and dangerous Fo, and has great Advantages upon us; its Glories are all present and in view, and so more apt to inveigle and engage the Affections; and tho the Happiness of Heaven infinitely transcends them, yet present things are apt to affect more, and draw stronger, than much greater things that are future and at a distance: and therefore we are to live more by Faith, which is the Evidence of things not seen, than by Sight, which is so easily dazled and misled by vain Appearances.

Besides, the World has not only Smiles and Flatteries to allure, but Frowns and Threats to afright us into its Service; if it cannot draw us into Luxury and Pride, by Affluence and Plenty, it will tempt us to Envy and Discontent, by the Straitness of a meaner Condition: and therefore we have great need to watch and pray against an Enemy, that has so many Stratagems to circumvent us.

But above all, Let us often call to mind the Example of our blessed Saviour, who refus'd the offer of all the Kingdoms of the World, and the Glory of them, when made to him upon unworthy Terms. From this great Example, we may learn to reject the greatest Honours and Preferments of the World, when inconsistent with the Glory of God and our own Salvation; *choosing rather to suffer Affliction with the People of God, than to enjoy the Pleasures of Sin for a season.*

Moreover, to wean us from the World, let us often think of the Vanity and Vexation of Spirit that attend all things under the Sun, together with the unconceivable Joy and Happiness that accompany the things above. Make these things by Faith and Meditation always present to you; this will raise you above all
Allure-

Allurements of the World, and in a great measure help you to overcome them; *for this is the Victory that overcometh the World, even your Faith,* 1 John 5. 4.

Finally, Brethren, whenever you are assaulted by any of the Baits or Temptations of the World, call to mind your Baptismal Engagement; remember you are under a Vow to renounce and forsake them, and cannot now yield to them, without being false to your Saviour, and injurious to your own Soul.

DISCOURSE XIII.

1 Pet. 2. 11. *Dearly Beloved, I beseech you as Strangers and Pilgrims, abstain from fleshly Lusts, which war against the Soul.*

HAVING dispatch'd the two first Enemies we renounce in Baptism, *viz.* the Devil and the World; I come now to the III. And that is the *Flesh, with all its sinful Lusts.* And this is the more dangerous, because 'tis an Enemy within us, that has gotten the Possession, and so is not so easily repuls'd or vanquish'd. The Devil and the World are without us, their Assaults are visible, and may therefore be the better resisted and overcome; but this is a Traitor in our Bosom, that sets upon us unawares; its Darts are invisible, and wound without being seen. The two former work by this, which is ever too ready to join Issue with them, and to betray us into their hands. This therefore is an Enemy that we must be more especially arm'd against; to which I shall direct from the Words read, *Dearly Beloved, I beseech you,* &c.

In the Verses immediately foregoing, the Apostle minds us of that exceeding great Honour and Dignity to which we are advanc'd by being Christians; styling us, ver. 9. *A chosen Generation, a royal Priesthood, a holy Nation, a peculiar People:* and minding us, ver. 10. *That tho we were once in the state of Heathens, yet now we are the People of God; having obtain'd this Mercy by being receiv'd into his Church and Favour.* And being thus highly honour'd, he wills us not to do any thing unworthy of our selves, nor debase the Dignity of our holy Profession. And because the greatest danger

is

is from the Lusts of the Flesh, he beseeches us here, *as Strangers and Pilgrims, to abstain from fleshly Lusts, which war against the Soul.* In treating of which Words, I must shew,

First, What are those fleshly Lusts we are to abstain from.
Secondly, How we are to renounce or abstain from them.
Thirdly, The Obligations that lie upon all Christians so to do.

First then, What are those sinful Lusts of the Flesh that we are to renounce or abstain from? In Answer to which,

By Flesh here, we are to understand, not only that carnal Part or Mass of Flesh which we carry about us, but likewise all those Senses and animal Faculties that belong to it, and are common to us with other Creatures.

By the Lusts of the Flesh, we are to understand all the Desires, Affections, Motions, or Appetites of that fleshly Part, or proceeding from any of those Senses and Faculties that appertain to it; which Desires are commonly carry'd out after those things that are most pleasing to this carnal Part, craving chiefly such as may gratify any Sense or Faculty of it.

By the sinful Lusts of the Flesh, we are to understand the exorbitant and irregular Desires of the Flesh, whereby it affects what it should not, and is carry'd out after what is forbidden.

Before the Degeneracy or Fall of Mankind, these Desires and Affections of the Soul were all orderly and regular, plac'd upon right Objects, and kept within due Bounds: but since they are become very extravagant and disorderly; and till they are spiritualiz'd, and brought under the managery of Reason and Religion, *are evil, only evil, and that continually,* Gen. 6. 5.

Infomuch, that in this natural State Reason is over-born by vicious Inclinations, and led into Evil by a sensual Appetite; by which means the Affections are either set upon wrong and unwarrantable Objects, or if better plac'd, run into Inordinacy and Excess; whereby Men abuse and pervert what otherwise in the moderate Use was permitted unto them. .

In short then, By the *sinful Lusts of the Flesh*, are meant all those extravagant Motions or Desires of the carnal Appetite, whereby being allur'd by some pleasing Baits or Suggestions, it inclines to, or fastens upon, some things which God has forbidden, or else exceeds in the immoderate Use of what were otherwise lawful and permitted to them.

These

These are in general those fleshly Lusts, from which we are here advis'd to abstain: If you desire a more particular Account, St. Paul has given a Catalogue of them, and reckon'd them up to our hand, Gal. 5. 19, 20. *The Works of the Flesh are manifest, which are these, Adultery, Fornication, Uncleanness, Lasciviousness, Idolatry, Witchcraft, Hatred, Variance, Emulations, Wrath, Strife, Seditions, Heresies, Envyings, Murder, Drunkenness, Revellings, and such like.*

Where *Adultery* leads the Van, which is the Incontinence of marry'd Persons, or the Violation of the Bond of Wedlock: this justly stands in the Front of this black List, it being the worst and foulest of all fleshly Lusts, and discovers a brutish and profligate Mind; for 'tis a sinning against the Remedy appointed in this Case, and prevents the Course allow'd to allay and extinguish such impure Flames.

Next to this follows *Fornication*, which is the Incontinence of single Persons, and making the Members of Christ to become the Members of an Harlot. Now, tho this be not altogether so bad as the former, yet 'tis justly to be reckon'd among the *sinful Lusts of the Flesh*, being a defiling and unhallowing of those Bodies, that ought to be kept as *Temples of the Holy Ghost*; and prostituting that to base and dirty Purposes, which should be consecrated and devoted to God's Service.

After this comes *Uncleanness*, by which is meant all Impurity of Mind, all vain and lustful Thoughts and Desires, together with those leud and unclean Practices, that were antiently us'd as sacred Rites to the Idols and false Gods of the Heathens.

To this is added in the next place, *Lasciviousness*, by which is meant all Wantonness of Behaviour, discover'd either by Words, Gestures or Actions; all Delight in filthy and obscene Communication, whether by speaking it our selves, or hearing it from others. All these are to be reckon'd and renounc'd among the *sinful Lusts of the Flesh*.

Next to this comes *Idolatry*, by which we are to understand all worshipping of false Gods; and more especially the paying those foremention'd leud and obscene Rites to them: to which may be added, the placing that Love, Delight and Confidence in any other thing, which is due to God only; as the covetous Man doth in *Mammon*, which in Scripture is stil'd *Idolatry*.

To this is added *Witchcraft*, which is the having recourse to Wizards or Sorcerers, and ascribing to them the Knowledg of
past

past and future Things, which belongs to God only.

Moreover, all kinds of *Variance*, which imply some of the lower Degrees of Difference and Dissension; all *Hatred*, which rises somewhat higher, and betokens an evil Mind; *Wrath*, which goes higher still, and supposes Rancour and Malice, and ends sometimes in Murder and Destruction. Yea, all manner of *Strife* and *Contention*, which make Men uneasy to themselves and others, are here reckon'd among the *Lusts of the Flesh*.

Furthermore, *Emulations*, in the Original ζῆλοι, which signifies a false and counterfeit Zeal in Matters of Religion; *Seditious*, which imply Factions and Disturbance in the State; *Heresies*, which are Divisions and Disorders in the Church, are here truly number'd among the *Works of the Flesh*.

Next to these follow bitter *Envyings* and *Contentions*, the sad Effects of Divisions both in Church and State; which, however palliated and colour'd over with Pretences of Religion, are the known and natural Consequents of these things.

Lastly, To bring up the Rear, come *Drunkennes*, *Revellings*, and *such like*, which are the gross Abuses of God's Creatures, and the miserable Evils of a sensual and licentious Appetite.

This is a brief account of the *sinful Lusts of the Flesh*, which in our Baptism we renounce, and of which the Apostle declares, That they *who do such things, shall not inherit the Kingdom of Heaven*. From whence I proceed,

Secondly, To shew how we are to renounce or abstain from these fleshly Lusts. And here we may note,

1. That there is an innocent and lawful Use of sensual Pleasures, tending to the refreshment of human Nature, and to ease the Cares of human Life; so that these are not absolutely to be renounc'd, but only when they become sinful by Inordinacy and Excess.

2. We are to abstain, not only from the outward Acts of those Sins, but from the inward Motions and Desires after them, having the very Garment spotted with the Flesh, and avoiding all the Occasions and Appearances of Evil. 'Tis not enough to abstain from these fleshly Lusts from a principle of Shame or fear of Punishment; for such will commit all Uncleaness with greediness, if they can but scape the Eye and Censure of the World. But it must proceed from an inward Hatred and Detestation of them, not cherishing any unchast Hankerings or Desires, nor suffering vain Thoughts to lodg or harbour within us.

N

3. We

3. We must renounce *All* the sinful Lusts of the Flesh; not lopping off this or that Limb or Branch only, but laying the Ax to the very Root, and cutting down the whole Body of Sin. There must be no Indulgence given to any one fleshly Lust, nor must any vicious Inclinations reign in us; *For the Wrath of God is reveal'd from Heaven against all Ungodliness of Men*, Rom. 1. 18. *And whoso keepeth the whole Law, and offends in one point, is guilty of all*, Jam. 2. 10. One Breach in a Wall may let in the Enemy, and one Leak in a Ship may sink the whole Vessel: in like manner, one Lust unmortified may sink the Soul, and drown it in Destruction and Perdition. This Renunciation must be universal, extending to all the sinful Lusts of the Flesh; not sparing *Agag*, or cherishing a reserve of kindness for any beloved Lust; but breaking off Correspondence with all, even the most darling Vice, tho it may be as dear to us as a *right Eye*, and we as loth to part with it as with a *right Hand*, Mat. 5. 29, 30.

Lastly, Our renouncing these sinful Lusts must be universal in respect of Time too; that is, we must so cast them off, as not to turn to them any more. Our being wash'd in the Waters of Baptism will be of no avail, if we *return with the Dog to his Vomit, and the Sow that was wash'd to her wallowing in the Mire*. If we hope to receive the Benefits and Privileges of Baptism, we must utterly abandon these fleshly Lusts, and so bid adieu to them as not to return again to Folly. •

Having then such *rich and precious Promises made to us in Jesus Christ*, let us (as the Apostle directs) *cleanse our selves from all filthiness of Flesh and Spirit, and perfect Holiness in the fear of God*. Thus we see what the sinful Lusts of the Flesh are, and how we are to renounce them. I proceed then,

Thirdly, To the Obligation that lies upon all Christians so to do; and this is very strong and indispensable, arising,

1. From the Precept and Command of God, who requires this from them: *This is the Will of God* (saith the Apostle) *even your Sanctification, that every one should know how to possess his Vessel in Sanctification and Honour; not in the Lust of Concupiscence, even as the Gentiles that know not God*, 1 Thes. 4. We find a strict Charge laid upon us, to deny all *Ungodliness and worldly Lusts*; and elsewhere, to put off, concerning the former Conversation, the *old Man, which is corrupt, according to the deceitful Lusts, and to be renew'd in the Spirit of our Mind*. To this purpose are those frequent Exhortations, *Not to live or walk after the Flesh; To make no provision for it to fulfil the*

Lusts thereof; To mortify our earthly Members, and the like. All which being the exprefs Commands of him whom we are bound above all things to obey, must carry a strong Obligation with them.

2. This Obligation is increas'd upon us from our own Promise; for at our entrance into the Church, we solemnly disclaim'd and abandon'd all the sinful Lusts of the Flesh; we enter'd into a holy War, not only against the Devil and the World, but against this homebred Enemy the Flesh, that wars against the Soul. Now all those that have retain'd any sense of Religion or Honesty, have ever thought themselves bound by their Word, and no Tie has been esteem'd so sacred and obliging as that of a Vow; and consequently having solemnly engag'd at our Baptism to abstain from fleshly Lusts, we stand oblig'd in Honour and Conscience to observe and perform it.

Lastly, Both the Design and Dignity of our Profession obliges us to renounce the sinful Lusts of the Flesh; for the end of it is to subdue and mortify our corrupt Affections, and it must be mightily dishonourable for us to be led captive by them. Christ has called us out of the World to be a peculiar People, and therefore wills us to purify our selves, *even as he is pure.* Now as nothing can better adorn our high and holy Calling, than a chaste Conversation coupled with Fear; so nothing can more blemish and bespatter it, than a filthy and debauch'd Conversation. In a word, without abandoning these sinful Lusts, we can neither answer the End, nor obtain the Reward of our Christianity.

Wherefore, let me beseech you, *Dearly Beloved, as Pilgrims and Strangers, to abstain from fleshly Lusts, which war against the Soul.*

If you need any farther Arguments to arm you against this inbred Fo, the Apostle minds us here of two weighty Motives to that end; the one taken from our State and Condition in this Life, which is that of Strangers and Pilgrims, and so not to be taken up with these vile and brutish Satisfactions. The

Other, from the extreme Danger and Damage of them, *they war against the Soul.* A word or two of each: And,

First, Our State and Condition in this World, which is that of Strangers and Pilgrims, requires us to abstain from fleshly Lusts. A Pilgrim, you know, will not take up in a strange Land, or be diverted from the Love and Business of his own Country, by any seeming Satisfaction he may meet with out of it; he is still passing on, and will not by the entertainment of an Inn become unmindful of the Comforts and Happiness of his

own Home, and therefore cannot be satisfied till he return to it.

Why, we are all Pilgrims and Strangers in this World, we have here no abiding City, but seek one to come; our Country is elsewhere, and it must be very improper for us to take up with the sensual Pleasures and Delights of this World, when we belong to another, and are daily marching and travelling towards it. Our Conversation (says the Apostle) or as 'tis in the Original, our Citizenship or Abode is in Heaven, this World is only a transitory Passage to it: Let those that belong to this World please themselves if they can in the carnal and sensual Satisfactions of it; as for us that are enfranchiz'd and made free of a better, we are to keep on in our way to it, and not be delay'd or diverted out of it by any of the sly Insinuations of *the World, the Flesh, or the Devil*. This we find the Patriarchs did, who confess'd themselves Strangers and Pilgrims upon Earth, and thereby declar'd they sought and belong'd to another Country, and therefore would not be inveigled with the Pleasures of this; and we too must do the same, if we mean to follow them to the same Place.

But there is another and greater Argument yet to dissuade us from these fleshly Lusts; and that is taken from the

Unspeakable Mischief and Damage done by them, they war against the Soul. Solomon tells us, That he that sinneth against God, wrongeth his own Soul; St. Paul, That he that commits Fornication, wrongeth his own Body; and St. Peter, That sensual Lusts war against the Soul. They war against the animal Soul or Life, by shortning our Days, and bringing that rottenness into the Bones which frequently occasions sudden and untimely Death.

They war against the rational and immortal Soul, and bring on it vast and sundry Inconveniences. As,

1. They destroy the *Purity* of the Soul, and bring on it the foulest Pollution and Defilement.
2. They debase the *Honour and Dignity* of the Soul, by defacing the Image of God in it, and degrading it beneath the Beast that perishes. They bring blindness and darkness into the Understanding, disorder into the Will and Affections, confusion and weakness into all the Faculties.
3. They war against the *Liberty* of the Soul, by bringing it into the basest and vilest Bondage.
4. They war against the *Peace* of the Soul, by filling it with perpetual Trouble and Anxiety.

*

Lastly,

Lastly, They war against the *eternal Happiness and Salvation* of the Soul, by depriving it of the blessed Vision and Enjoyment of God; and dooming it for ever to the wretched Society of the Devil and his Angels.

These, and far greater Evils than can be exprest or conceiv'd, are the miserable Effects of this unhappy War, where these fleshly Lusts prevail and domineer; which is sufficient to arm us with the greatest Courage and Resolution against them. Thus we have seen the Three great Enemies of Christ and our Salvation, *The Devil, the World, and the Flesh*, which we renounce in our Baptism, and must encounter in the whole course of our Lives ever after. By all which it appears,

How truly Christianity is stil'd a *Warfare*, where when we enter on it, we do as it were enter the Field, and must expect to be assaulted on every side. However, we have seen their Wiles and Temptations, and how we may be enabled to resist and vanquish them; for greater is he that is for us, than they that are against us: So that if we fight manfully under his Banner, and continue his faithful Servants and Soldiers (as we have promis'd) to our Lives end, we shall be sure to be victorious, *and become more than Conquerors through Christ that loved us.*

DISCOURSE XIV.

Mark 1. 15. *Repent ye, and believe the Gospel.*

WE are yet upon the Baptismal Covenant; where having shew'd the Privileges promis'd and confer'd on God's part, I come to the Duties or Conditions requir'd and promis'd on ours, which were these three, Repentance, Faith, and Obedience. The former teaches us what to forsake; which, as our Catechism directs, are, *The Devil and all his Works, the Poms and Vanities of this wicked World, and all the sinful Lusts of the Flesh.* The second teaches us what to believe, namely, *All the Articles of our Christian Faith.* The third, what we are to do, *viz. To keep God's holy Will and Commandments, and walk in the same all the days of our Life.*

Of the First, to wit, the Doctrine of Repentance, I have discours'd at large, shewing it to be a forsaking of all manner of Sin, by renouncing our three Ghostly Enemies, the Devil, the World, and the Flesh, who are daily tempting and enticing us to it. I come now to the

Second Condition promis'd and requir'd on our part, to entitle us to the Privileges of Baptism, and that is Faith; exprest in our Catechism, *By believing all the Articles of our Christian Faith*: of which I shall treat from these words of St. Mark, *Believe the Gospel*.

The Words are the first great Message deliver'd to the World, upon our blessed Saviour's coming into it: St. John prepar'd for his coming by preaching of Repentance; *Repent* (saith he) *for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand*. And immediately upon his coming, this other Branch was added to it, *Repent and believe the Gospel*. In speaking to which words, as they relate to the Catechism, I must shew,

First, What we are to understand by the Gospel, or the Articles of our Christian Faith.

Secondly, What is meant by Believing these Articles. And,

Thirdly, What by believing All the Articles of our Christian Faith.

First then, What are we to understand here by the Gospel, or the Articles of the Christian Faith? In answer to which, *Gospel* is an old Saxon word, that signifies the same with *God's Word*; and denotes that divine Revelation made to the World concerning the Salvation of Mankind by Jesus Christ: 'twas but obscurely reveal'd by *Moses* and the Prophets under the Old Testament, but more fully and plainly by Christ and his Apostles in the New.

The Law was given by *Moses*, veil'd with dark Types and Shadows; but Grace and Truth came by Jesus Christ, who unridled those Types, and made the Shadows vanish by exhibiting the Substance: for which Reason Life and Immortality, which was before wrap'd in Darkness, is said to be brought to Light by the Gospel.

By the Articles of the Christian Faith, are meant the prime fundamental Truths of that divine Revelation, necessary to be known
in

in order to Salvation: for tho all the Parts and Passages of Holy Scripture be equally true, being dictated by the same infallible Spirit, yet they are not equally necessary; there are some less momentous or circumstantial things, of which Men may be ignorant, without the hazard of their Salvation.

Now those more weighty and substantial Truths, the knowledge whereof is necessary to the happiness of our Souls, are what we here understand by the Articles of the Christian Faith: which great Truths being dispers'd up and down in the Gospel, are briefly sum'd up to our hands, in that excellent Summary known by the name of the *Apostles Creed*. This St. Paul in his Epistle to the *Romans* calls, *The Form of Doctrine*, Rom. 6. 17. in his Epistle to the *Ephesians*, *The one Faith*, Ephes. 4. 5. in his Epistle to *Timothy*, *The Form of sound Words*, 2 Tim. 1. 13. St. Jude styles it, *The Faith once deliver'd to the Saints*, ver. 3. The Author to the *Hebrews*, *The Profession of Faith*, Heb. 10. 23. In all which places there is an allusion or reference to the Apostles Creed; the great fundamental Points whereof, making up and holding together the whole Body of Christian Divinity, are stil'd the Joints or Articles of the Christian Faith.

But, *Secondly*, what is it to Believe these Articles? In answer to which, To believe the Gospel or Articles of the Christian Faith, as 'tis here promis'd by every baptiz'd Christian, implies these two things:

1. The Assent of the Mind to the truth of them. And,
2. The Consent of the Will and Affections in embracing and acting according to them.

1. I say, To believe the Articles of the Christian Faith, is firmly to assent to the Truth of them; and that because they are deliver'd by him that is Truth it self, attested by his Word that cannot lie, and confirm'd by such Miracles as cannot deceive. And where these things concur, that is, where there is infallible Testimony and evident Proof, there it must be unreasonable to withhold Assent. And since these things meet in the Articles of our Christian Faith, we are to have a firm Belief and Persuasion of the Truth of them.

We have not follow'd cunningly devis'd Fables, says the Apostle, in what we deliver'd to you: *But we deliver to you that which we also receiv'd, being spoken first by the Lord, and confirm'd unto us by them that heard him*, Heb. 2. 3. *Prophecy came not (says St. Peter) by the Will of Man, but holy Men of God spake as they were mov'd*

mov'd by the Holy Ghost, 2 Pet. 1. 21. So that as all Scripture in general, so particularly the necessary Doctrines of Faith collected out of it, are given by Inspiration of God, and are profitable for Doctrine, for Reproof, for Instruction in Righteousness, *that the Man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnish'd unto all good Works*, 2 Tim. 3. 16. meaning, that these weighty and useful Truths are dictated by an infallible Spirit, and therefore to be receiv'd and believ'd by us. This is that Confession of Faith in which we are requir'd to continue stedfast; that Form of sound Words, which we are to hold fast without wavering, and not to be shaken by any from the belief of it. In token hereof it is, that our Church requires us to be in the posture of Standing in rehearsing of it, to signify our Resolution of adhering and standing to it.

So that all the Deists and Scepticks of our Age, who deride the Mysteries of the Gospel, or deny the Articles of the Christian Faith, are guilty of a manifest Breach of their baptismal Vow, in letting go that Profession of Faith which they promis'd to hold fast, and calling in question those Truths which they engag'd solemnly and constantly to believe. Such as these are truly Deserters and Renegadoes from the Faith, who instead of renouncing their Enemies, renounce their own Engagements, by flying to those they promis'd to fight against, and forsaking him to whom they vow'd all Fidelity. And if the shame and danger of flying from our Colours be so great in our common Battels, what will be the Fate of those that desert their Saviour in this spiritual Warfare, and prove thus perfidious to the Captain of our Salvation? To answer then this part of our Vow, we must not stagger through Unbelief, but yield a firm and unshaken Assent to the Truths of the Gospel, and take heed of all doubting or disbelieving the Articles of our Christian Faith.

But this is not all: To believe these Articles, implies not barely an Assent to the Truth of them in our Mind, but,

2. The Consent of our Will and Affections to them, by receiving them into our Hearts, and suffering them to have a due Influence upon our Lives and Conversations. The Christian Religion is not barely a speculative Science, to entertain our Minds with barren and empty Notions, but 'tis a practical Art that designs to better our Lives, and teach us how to order our Conversation aright: and when by Baptism we enter upon the Profession of it, we enter upon a new Life, and engage to square our

Actions

ACTIONS by the Rules of it. The Faith here promis'd, is not a dead ineffectual Faith, that rests in a mere Assent and Speculation of divine Truths ; but an operative Faith that works by Love, and influences the Soul to all the Parts of a holy Life. These mysterious Truths are reveal'd, not to satisfy our Curiosity, or to beget in us a vain Credulity, but to regulate our Practice and our Belief of them ; not so much indeed to make us wiser, as better Christians.

This St. *James* tells us at large, who asks, *What does it profit, my Brethren, if a Man say he hath Faith, and hath not Works ? can such a Faith save him ? Faith without Works is dead, being alone.* And can that lead or bring any to Eternal Life ? This is no better than the Faith of Devils, who believe and tremble, and groan for ever under the Miseries of an idle Belief without practice, *James* 2. 14, 15, 19.

The Author to the *Hebrews*, Chap. 11. tells us of the many great and good Works that proceeded from the Faith of *Abraham*, *Moses*, and the other Patriarchs ; what mighty things were achiev'd by it, and how great a Recompence of Reward they receiv'd by it.

Indeed, as a Learned Divine has well observ'd, ' We do not
' believe enough of any thing until it lead us to act according to
' that Belief. The things that worldly Men believe, put them
' upon Actions agreeable to such Persuasions : The Merchant be-
' lieves there are Jewels and rich Wares in foreign Lands, and he
' puts to Sea and seeks to purchase them ; the Country-man be-
' lieves he shall reap, and therefore he sows ; the Soldier believes
' he shall have Victory and Spoil, and therefore he fights : And
' shall the Christian alone believe and sit still, or do nothing to-
' wards it ? Are not the Principles of Religion sure, the Hopes
' better, and the Gains infinitely greater than those of worldly
' Men ? And is it not a shame, that their Faith should be so ac-
' tive and busy in smaller matters, and ours so idle and sluggish
' in things which so vastly exceed them ? So that the practical
Atheist and debauch'd Persons, who may perhaps believe aright
as to the Truth of Religion, are justly chargeable with the breach
of this Vow, by not living or acting accordingly.

Thus we see what we are to understand by the Articles of the Christian Faith, *viz.* The necessary Points of Faith sum'd up in the Apostles Creed ; and likewise, what by believing these Articles, namely, Not barely assenting to them with our Under-
O standing,

standing, but receiving them into our Hearts, and exerting the Power of them in our Lives and Conversations.

From whence I proceed to consider,

Thirdly, The Extent of our Belief, which we are told is to reach to *All* the Articles of the Christian Faith: we are not to pick and chuse, believing some and rejecting others; but our Faith must extend to all, for so we promis'd in our Baptism, to believe all the Articles of our Christian Faith: the Reason whereof is plain; for,

1. They have all the same Authority, being reveal'd by the same holy unerring Spirit. And,

2. They all tend to the same End, even the Salvation of our Souls; and being all necessary to that end, we are to take no more nor no less into our Creed, but to keep to that Standard or Rule of Faith which the Apostles have left us.

But for the fuller Explication hereof, we must note, that this Branch of our Vow obliges to all the Articles of our Faith.

1. Extensive, that is, we must believe them All.

2. Exclusive, that is, we must believe Them and no more.

1. I say, our Faith must extend to all these Articles; and that, as was before observ'd, because they are all grounded upon the same Authority, being all equally the Dictates of a divine infallible Spirit. Inasmuch, that what St. James affirms concerning the Law, is true likewise of the Christian Faith; *he that offendeth in one Point, is guilty of all*. In like manner, he that rejects one Article, is guilty of the whole; because in disbelieving one, he contemns that Authority that reveal'd and requires all the rest. The Apostles had the holy Spirit sent to them, to lead them into all, and nothing but Truth; and therefore what they deliver'd must be embrac'd as true, and counted worthy of all acceptation. By rejecting any part of our Creed, our Faith becomes maim'd and imperfect, and may make us fall short of Salvation.

In a word, we engage here, not to shrink from the Confession or Belief of any one Article handed down from the Apostles, or any one Truth contain'd in them.

2. Our believing all the *Articles of the Christian Faith*, here implies the Belief of those and no other; we may not coin new Articles of Faith of our own, nor yet receive any for current that are new-coin'd by others. Christ is the sole Lord and Master of our Faith and Conscience, and therefore we must not become the Servants of Men, and enslave our Minds to their new-invented Doctrines.

Doctrines. The Pharisees were rebuk'd by our Saviour for their teaching for Doctrines, or necessary points of Faith, the Commandments of Men, and laying heavy Burdens on other mens Consciences, which themselves would not touch with the least of their Fingers, *Mat. 15. 9. & 23. 4.* St. *Paul* declares, that if an Angel from Heaven should preach any other Gospel, or add any new Articles of Faith to those we have receiv'd, we are to account him accursed, *Gal. 1. 8, 9.* where we find this weighty Caution twice repeated and inculcated upon us.

We may indeed, and ought, to obey some external and alterable Rules of Order and Decency, for the greater Reverence and Solemnity of publick Worship; but we may not receive any new Points of Doctrine as necessary to Salvation, nor suffer doubtful Problems to advance into Articles of Faith. And therefore the new-coin'd Articles of Purgatory, Transubstantiation, and the like, invented by the Church of *Rome*, are gross Impositions on the Faith of Christians, and ought neither to be obtruded upon, or admitted by any.

Moreover, to believe it necessary to Salvation, to abstain from some sorts of Meats, or some indifferent Rites and Ceremonies in the Worship of God, to prohibit them as simply unlawful, and not to be us'd upon peril of Damnation, are Additions to Religion, and making new Points of Faith. Such was theirs in the Apostles days, who said, in indifferent matters, *Touch not, taste not, handle not*; and of the same kind is theirs in ours, who say, *Kneel not, use not a Form of Prayer, wear not such a Garment*, and the like, which being no where forbidden, may not be believ'd or abstain'd from as unlawful. Such Doctrines or Prohibitions as these, where they are urg'd upon our Belief or Practice, are gross Infringements of Christian Liberty, and unwarrantable Additions to the Christian Faith; and consequently this Branch of our Vow wills us not to listen to, or be led away by them. Thus we see the Sense of what is requir'd and engag'd by us, when we promise to believe all the Articles of our Christian Faith; which is carefully to be observ'd by all that are baptiz'd, upon pain of forfeiting all the Benefits and Privileges of Baptism. To this we have farther Encouragement,

1. From the exceeding great Reward annex'd to our keeping to the Christian Faith. Our blessed Saviour, the Author and Finisher of our Faith, assures us, *That he that believeth shall be saved*, Mark 16. 16. meaning, that he shall partake of that great Sal-

vation which he has purchas'd and promis'd to all his faithful Followers. Hence we find St. Paul declaring of himself, *That he had fought the good fight*; which was his fulfilling of the first part of his Vow, by warring against those ghostly Enemies: *He had kept the Faith*, which was his performing this second Part of it, by believing all the Articles of the Christian Faith; and therefore, *henceforth (saith he) is laid up for me a Crown of Righteousness, which God the Righteous Judg shall give me at the last Day; and not to me only, but to all that by Faith look for his Appearance.*

Lastly, The Danger of deserting the Faith is no less dreadful and unexpressible; for our Saviour in the same place tells us, *That he that believeth not shall be damned*; where Hell is made the Portion of Unbelievers, and the hottest place of it is prepar'd for such as revolt from the Christian Faith.

DISCOURSE XV.

Mat. 19. latter part of the 17th Verse. *If thou wilt enter into Life, keep the Commandments.*

I Discours'd the last time of the Second Condition requir'd and promis'd in the Baptismal Covenant, which taught us what to believe, viz. *All the Articles of the Christian Faith.* I proceed now to the

III. Condition requir'd in it, which directs us what we are to do; and that is, *To keep God's holy Will and Commandments, and to walk in the same all the days of our Life.* Whereas the former gave us the great Rule of Faith to direct our Belief; this instructs us in the great Rule of Life and Manners to regulate our Practice. Of this I shall treat at this time from these Words of our Saviour, *If thou wilt enter into Life, keep the Commandments.*

The Words are part of an Answer to a Question put to our Saviour by a certain Man, who, in the Verse before the Text, came to him and ask'd him, saying, *Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal Life?* To whom our Saviour replies in the Words read, *If thou wilt enter into Life, keep the Commandments.* To the same purpose our Catechism teaches us, *If we will*

will enter into Life by the Door of Baptism, we must keep God's holy Will and Commandments, and walk in the same all the days of our Life.

For the Explication of this part of our Vow, we must enquire,

First, What is meant here by God's holy Will and Commandments.

Secondly, What by keeping his holy Will and Commandments.

Thirdly, What by walking in the same all the days of our Life.

Fourthly, I must shew this to be a necessary Condition of Life and Salvation.

For the *First* : By God's holy Will we are to understand his reveal'd Will, as 'tis made known to us, either by the Light of Nature, or by the Light of Scripture; for both these ways he hath discover'd his Mind and Will unto Mankind. By the Light of Nature we are taught many great and important Truths; as, That there is a God, That he is to be worship'd, That Right and Justice is to be done to all Men, and That we should do to others as we would be done by our selves. These and many other Principles of Religion are engraven on our very Natures, and may be learn'd by the plain Deductions of common Reason. This is a good Rule as far as it reaches, and helps to direct us in many weighty Dutys both towards God and Man; indeed this was all the Rule the Gentile World had to walk by, for they *having no written Law, were (as the Apostle tells us) a Law unto themselves, having the Law of God written in their Hearts; their Thoughts the mean while bearing witness, and their Conscience accusing or excusing one another, Rom. 2.* For which reason they were said to be left without Excuse in Matters, wherein they acted contrary to this natural Light.

But where this was defective, God Almighty hath supply'd it to the Christian World by the Light of Scripture; he hath spoken to us in these latter Days by his Son, whom he hath made Heir of all things, by whom also he made the World. This Son of God, who lay in the Bosom of the Father, hath reveal'd to us his whole Mind and Will; so that we are not left to the blind and uncertain Conduct of Nature, but have a more sure Word of Prophecy, whereunto we do well to take heed, as to a Light shining in a dark Place. He hath given us his Word, to be *a Light unto our Feet, and a Lanthorn unto our Paths*; by this he hath directed

rected us how to walk, so as to please him and profit our selves. This is the holy Will of God.

By his Commandments, we are to understand that Law which was first given by *Moses* on Mount *Sinai*, and after enlarg'd and expounded by Christ on the Mount of *Olives*; in which he hath fully instructed us in our Duty, and given us Precepts that far surpass, not only the dark Directions of natural Light, but the obscure Revelation of *Moses's* Law. In a word, we have there the most excellent Rules for the conduct of our Lives here, and to bring us to eternal Life and Happiness hereafter. These are his Commandments.

But *Secondly*, What is it to keep God's holy Will and Commandments? In Answer to which, 'Tis not barely to know the Will of God, or to keep his Commandments in remembrance, but to live in obedience to the one, and observation of the other; to make God's Will the Guide of our Lives, and his Commandments the Rule of our Actions. So that the great Duty here requir'd and expected from us, is Obedience; which being the last and great Condition of the baptismal Covenant, must be unfolded to you. To which end I shall, as briefly as I can, explain the Nature and Qualifications of true Obedience. For the Nature of it; 'Tis the conforming our Lives and Actions to the Will and Ways of God; for his Will being the Measure and Standard of all Vertue and Goodness, is to be the Rule of our Lives, and the Measure of our Obedience. Accordingly his Commandments teach us to demean our selves towards God with all Piety and Devotion, to put our whole Trust in him, and to honour his holy Name and his Word. Towards Men they direct to all Acts of Justice, Honesty and Charity; and likewise to all Sobriety, Meekness, Patience, and Contentedness towards our selves. Now when we lead our Lives by these Directions, and square our Actions by these Rules, then do we shew our selves to be his Servants. So that as we are to try the Soundness of our Doctrines by the Touchstone of the Creed, so are we to examine the Goodness of our Doings by the Standard of the Commandments. But how is our Obedience to God's Will and Commandments to be qualified, to render it acceptable? Why, it must have three Qualifications to that end, *viz.* Sincerity, Integrity, and Constancy.

1st. I say, Our Obedience must be accompanied with Sincerity; that is, it must be true undissembled Service, void of all Hypocrisy or corrupt Designs in serving him: to this end, it must proceed from an inward Principle of Love, inclining us to obey his Laws for his own sake, and because he commands them. Where this is wanting, Men do not observe God's Will but their own, neither do they so much serve God as themselves. True Evangelical Obedience is hearty and sincere, 'tis done as unto God, and from an inward desire to please him; 'tis not mov'd, like an Engine, by the Wheels of Interest, nor acted by by-Ends or external Motives in his Service; but proceeds from a Principle within, which keeps good Men as much, yea more to their Duty in secret, than in the sight of Man. God cares not for a heartless Service, he hates those unwilling Sacrifices that must be dragg'd to the Altar; his Call is, *My Son, give me thy Heart*: where this is, he accepts of weak and imperfect Services; but where this is wanting, the most grand and pompous Shews are an Abomination to him. God indeed does not forbid us all Love to our selves, nor will us to cast off all regard to our own Interest in his Service: No, he proposes to us great Rewards, as Motives to Obedience; and the most eminent Saints have ever had an Eye to the Recompence of Reward. So that this alone cannot corrupt our Service, or render our Obedience insincere; 'tis the joining the love of Sin with the serving of God that corrupts the Duty, and 'tis the designing or preferring any temporal Ends in his Service that wholly mars the Offering: and therefore that we may obey and serve God acceptably, it must come from the Heart, and not be embas'd by sinister and secular Ends.

2dly. Another Qualification of true Obedience, is Integrity; which imports the Obedience of the whole Man to the whole Law or Will of God. It must be intire in respect to the whole Man; that is, all the Faculties and Powers both of Soul and Body, are to be exercis'd and employ'd in his Service. Our blessed Saviour requires us, *To love the Lord our God with all our Heart, with all our Soul, and with all our Mind*; meaning, that those noble Faculties of our Understanding, Will and Affections, should be all principally bent towards God, and that we are to labour to know, love and serve him above all things. Besides which, he wills us *To love him with all our Strength*; that is, with all our bodily Powers, all the Members whereof are to be employ'd, not in the Service of Sin, but to be Instruments of Righteousness and Holiness.

liness unto God; our Mouths are to be open'd to shew forth his Praise; our Tongues to be Heralds to proclaim his Honour; our Hands to be lifted up in daily Supplications unto God, and open'd in charitable Dispositions to our distressed Neighbours; our Feet to be swift, not to shed Blood, but to run the Paths of God's Commandments. Thus must our Obedience be intire, in respect of the Subject, by being the Service of the whole Man. Moreover,

It must be intire in respect of the Object, by being extended to the whole Will and Law of God. *Then shall I not be ashamed (says the Psalmist) when I have respect to all thy Commandments.* 'Tis the universality of our Obedience that recommends it unto God, for that manifestly shews it to proceed from a Principle of Love and Sense of Duty to him: *Zachary and Elizabeth* are commended for *walking in all the Commandments of the Lord blameless*, Luke 1. 6. Indeed, the Authority of God equally running thro all his Laws, there can be no reason why we should observe one and despise another; unless it be from some by-end, and partiality to our selves, which is enough to debase our Service, and render it unpleasing to him. He that said, *Thou shalt not commit Adultery*; said also, *Thou shalt not Steal*; so that, tho thou avoid'st Adultery, yet if thou Steal thou art a Transgressor of the Law: Yea, St. James declares, *That if we keep the whole Law, and offend but in one Point, we are guilty of all*; because such a partial Observance proceeds not from the true Motive of Obedience, which is the Divine Authority, for that being stamp'd on all his Laws, would make them all current, and extend our Obedience as far as that reaches, even to all the Commandments: So that our Obedience cannot be sincere unless it be universal. Again, It must be intire, not only as to the Object, but as to the Time, it must hold out and extend to the whole Course of our Life; which is the

Next Qualification of true Obedience, viz. *Constancy and Perseverance to the end*. And this will lead me to the

Third thing propounded to be spoken to, which was, To shew what is meant by *walking in the same all the days of our Life*. By which no more nor less can be meant, Than that we do not falter or tire in our Christian Course, but persevere and hold out to the end; our Obedience must be constant as well as sincere, and continue all the days of our Life. 'Tis not enough to serve and obey

obey God now and then, by fits and starts, to be warm and zealous at some times and in some Duties, and at other times to be cold and careless in his Service; this is an humorfom and hypocritical sort of Obedience, that finds no Acceptance either with God or Man. To approve our selves Christ's faithful Soldiers and Servants, our Service must be more uniform and constant, and our Obedience last to our Lives end. We find God Almighty asking the Question, *If a righteous Man turn from his Righteousness and commit Iniquity, and do according to all that a wicked Man doth, shall he live?* And answers it himself, *No, by no means, all his former Righteousness shall not be mention'd, and in the Sin that he hath sinned, in that shall he die,* Ezek. 18. 24. 'Tis they who by patient continuing in well-doing seek for Glory and Immortality, *that shall have eternal Life,* Rom. 2. 6. And this will bring me to the

Fourth and Last Thing propounded, and that is to shew, That this sincere, uniform and constant Obedience, is one of the Terms of the Baptismal Covenant; and a Condition of eternal Life and Salvation. When Christ commission'd his Apostles to baptize all Nations, he bid them Teach them to observe all things whatsoever he had commanded them, Mat. 28. 19, 20. withal telling them, That he who breaks the least of these Commandments, shall be called least, that is, none at all in the Kingdom of Heaven. If we will enter into Life, our Saviour directs us to keep the Commandments; and our Catechism teaches, that to be Inheritors of the Kingdom of Heaven, we must keep God's holy Will and Commandments, and walk in the same all the Days of our Life. The Author to the Hebrews tells us, That Christ is become the Author of eternal Salvation to all and only those that obey him, Heb. 5. 9. which made himself say, He that endures to the end, the same shall be saved, Mat. 10. 22. and elsewhere, Be faithful unto Death, and I will give thee a Crown of Life. This Crown is promis'd to none but such as continue stedfast in the Faith, and persevere to the last in well-doing; For Tribulation and Anguish shall be render'd to every Soul that doth Evil, and they that hold not out to the end of the Race shall never obtain the Prize. But here it may be ask'd, If this intire and constant Obedience be the necessary Condition of eternal Life, Who can then be sav'd, since there is none that liveth and sins not?

To which I answer, That the rigorous Conditions of the old Covenant are by the Satisfaction and Intercession of Christ mitigated into milder and easier Terms in the New; and instead of

that exact unfinning Obedience requir'd in the former, we may be justify'd and sav'd by a sincere, tho imperfect Obedience in the latter. The first Terms were, *Do this and live, and the Soul that sins shall die*; by which, the least Transgression excluded us from all hopes of Mercy, and consign'd us over to eternal Perdition: but now, by the Merits of our Saviour, Repentance and Amendment to the best of our power entitles us to Mercy, and will instate us into the Kingdom of Heaven. God Almighty has proclaim'd himself to be a *God gracious and merciful, long-suffering, abundant in Goodness and Truth, forgiving Iniquity, Transgression and Sin*; and tho he will not acquit the guilty that live in an obstinate Violation of his Laws, yet he *shews Mercy to thousands, in them that love him, and keep his Commandments*: He has abated of the Rigor of the first Covenant, and accepts now of our hearty Desires and Endeavours to please him in the Second: He allows for our Infirmities, and will not be extreme to mark all that we have done amiss; insomuch, that tho the Law denounces nothing but Death and a Curse upon every Breach of it, yet we may now appeal from the Extremity of the Law to the Equity of the Gospel; for we are not (as the Apostle tells us) *under the Law, but under Grace*: we shall not suffer for involuntary Failings where our Hearts are upright, but may take Sanctuary in such cases from the Sentence of an incens'd Judg, in the Merits and Mercies of a Saviour. However, this is not intended to give any Encouragement to Sin, but to relieve us from the heavy Burden and Curse of it: *Shall we sin* (says the Apostle) *that Grace may abound?* No, God forbid! This were to defeat the ends both of the Law and the Gospel; and nothing creates greater and juster Fury than abus'd Mercy.

Thus I have briefly laid before you, both the Privileges of the Baptismal Covenant bestow'd on God's part, whereby we are made *the Members of Christ, the Children of God, and Inheritors of the Kingdom of Heaven*; and likewise the Conditions to be perform'd on our part, to be made Partakers of them; which are to renounce all our spiritual Enemies, to *believe all the Articles of the Christian Faith*, and to *keep God's holy Will and Commandments all the Days of our Life*. I shall conclude with two things by way of Application.

1. We may infer from hence the Folly and Presumption of those, who expect the Blessings of the Covenant without performing the Conditions. A Covenant necessarily implies mutual Engagements; and in this, as God promises to be our God, and bestows

bestows many and great Blessings upon us, so we engage to be his People, and to demean our selves accordingly : so that if we neglect our Duty to God, and lead wicked and unholy Lives, we forfeit his Favour, and can lay no Claim to any of his Blessings. And yet some have greedily embrac'd a vain Opinion, that in this new Covenant, God has taken all upon himself, and requires nothing, or as good as nothing, from us. They talk of nothing but absolute Promises, and think it a Disparagement to the Freedom of divine Grace, that any thing should be expected from them ; but only to believe, that is, to be confident that God will perform his part, tho they do nothing on theirs ; which (as one has well observ'd) is an easy Condition indeed to Fools, but the hardest in the World to a wise Man. But be not deceiv'd, God expects other things from us, namely, Repentance and new Obedience ; for, *Not every one that says, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, but he that doth the Will of my Father which is in Heaven ;* and Baptism will never save us, without that newness of Life which is promis'd in it.

Wherefore, 2. As we hope for Mercy and Salvation by Christ, let us perform the Conditions on our part, by forsaking Sin, and living in obedience to God's Laws ; let us make his holy Will and Commandments the Rule of our Actions and Walk.

DISCOURSE XVI.

Psal. 66. 13. latter part. I will pay thee my Vows.

HAVING finish'd the three first Questions and Answers of the Catechism, containing both the Privileges and the Conditions of the Baptismal Covenant ; I shall go on in this, to the

IV. Question and Answer, contain'd in these Words,

Dost thou think that thou art bound to believe and do as they have promis'd for thee ? To which the Answer is,

Yes verily, and by God's help so I will ; and I heartily thank our heavenly Father, who hath called me to this state of Salvation thro Jesus Christ ; and I pray unto God to give me his Grace, that I may continue in the same to my Life's end.

In this Question, the Child that was baptiz'd in his Infancy is ask'd in his proper Years, concerning his Sense of that Vow which was made by others in his behalf, and whether he takes himself to be bound by it.

In answer to which, three things are return'd by him.

First, A solemn Recognition of the Vow, owning the Obligation of it, together with a Promise and Resolution (by God's help) of performing it, in those words, *Yes verily, and by God's help so I will.*

Secondly, A grateful Acknowledgment and Commemoration of the invaluable Blessings receiv'd thereby, in those words, *And I heartily thank our heavenly Father, who hath called me to this State, &c.*

Thirdly, An affectionate Prayer to God for his Grace and Assistance, to persevere in it to the last, in those words, *And I pray unto God to give me his Grace, that I may continue in the same to my Life's end.* These being all weighty and important Matters, must be particularly handled. I begin

First, With the solemn Recognition made by Children in their riper Years, of that Baptismal Vow which was entred into by others in their behalf in their Infancy; in which they own the Obligation, and declare their Resolution of performing it, in those words, *Yes verily, and by God's help so I will.* Where the word *verity* represents the Purity, and *by God's help*, the Piety of their Intention. Of this I shall treat at this time from these words of the Psalmist, *I will pay thee my Vows.* For the better handling whereof, I must enquire,

First, Into the Nature of a Vow, and shew what it is.

Secondly, I must shew the Obligation or binding Force of it.

Thirdly, I shall apply both to our Baptismal Vow.

First, To understand the Nature of a Vow, you must note, that all Engagements are made either to God or Men: an Engagement made to Man, is properly called a Promise, which if it be under Hand and Seal, and attested by the Witness of Men, is stil'd a Bond; if confirm'd by calling in God to witness, it is truly an Oath. But an Engagement made to God as the Party, is properly a Vow; which may be defin'd to be a religious Act, where-
by

by a Man engages himself to God, to perform something that is lawful and honest ; where 'tis stil'd a religious Act, because 'tis made to God, and is part of that Homage and Service we owe to him. We find in the holy Scriptures many Commands and Directions about Vows, when they are to be made, and how to be paid. *David* bids us to vow unto the Lord, and to take care to pay it, *Psal.* 6. 11. and *Solomon* wills not to defer the Payment of them, *Eccles.* 5. Vows are indeed an Acknowledgment of the Power and Goodness of God ; they are directed to him as the Party, they tend to his Glory, and proceed from a sense of that Homage and Duty we owe him, and must therefore be a religious Act. Next,

'Tis said to be a religious Act, in which we engage our selves to God, and this distinguishes it both from a Promise and an Oath : for a Promise is made to Men and one another, but a Vow is made only to God ; and in an Oath God is call'd in as a Witness, but in a Vow God is made a Party ; we swear By him, but we vow To him. Moreover,

'Tis added, That in a Vow we engage unto God something that is lawful and honest ; this shews us the Matter of a Vow, which being directed unto God, must be always something that is both lawful and laudable. Nothing that is sinful or trivial is to be vow'd to him, for a Vow ties always to Performance, and therefore the Matter of it must be such as may be lawfully and fitly done. From the Explication of the Nature I proceed,

Secondly, To consider, what is more to our purpose, the Obligation of a Vow ; and this is of all things the most sacred and inviolable, because 'tis immediately made to God. A Promise made to Men obliges to Performance, by virtue of the Command of God ; an Oath carries a higher Obligation, by reason of the Testimony of God, which is call'd in to back it ; but a Vow has the highest Obligation of all, because God is immediately concern'd in it, and 'tis particularly directed to himself. To falsify with Men is a vile piece of Fraud and Deceit, but to prove false to our Maker is the very height of Impiety ; and therefore we find this Bond of a Vow and an Oath too, tied most strictly upon us by God himself, *Numb.* 30. 2. *If a Man vow a Vow unto the Lord, or swear an Oath to bind his Soul with a Bond, he shall not break his Word, he shall do according to all that proceeded out of his Mouth.* Where God Almighty lays a strict Obligation on all Men to perform their Vows : he has made it a Bond that is not to be broken, and has
tied

tied our Heart and our Hands to make good all that thus comes out of our Mouth. Yea, we find not only many strict Precepts to convince us of the Duty, but many pious Examples too in sacred Writ, to excite our Imitation. *Solomon* bids us to *vow unto the Lord, and not to defer to pay it*, Eccles. 5. *David* wills us to *offer unto God Thanksgivings, and to pay our Vows to the Lord*, Psal. 50. And for himself, he tells us his Resolution in the Text, of *paying his Vows unto the Lord*; and elsewhere, *I will pay my Vows in the sight of all that fear him*, Psal. 22. *Jonah* declares, *All that I have vow'd will I pay unto the Lord*, Jonah 2. 9. And great reason for it too, for a Vow lays a Debt upon every one that makes it, and natural Justice as well as Gratitude very strongly obliges them to pay it: But if we add to this, the great Benefit that accrues from observing this Act of Justice, together with the extreme Danger of the contrary, it will appear to be, not only the greatest Falshood, but the grossest Folly to with-hold it. And this will lead me to consider,

Thirdly, The Obligation of the Baptismal Vow, together with the Recognition that the baptiz'd Party is here taught to make of it. This is that solemn Engagement we all entred into at our entrance upon Christianity, which we are all to mind and make good in the whole Course of our Lives: 'Tis that sacred Bond whereby we have bound our selves to God, which we are not to break or unloose, but *to do according to all that has proceeded out of our Mouth*. And here we may observe,

1. The great Goodness of God in accepting the Vow and Stipulation of others in the behalf of Infants, before they are able to do it for themselves. To be in Covenant with God, is the sole Foundation of all our Happiness; for thereby alone, *God becomes our God, and we become his People*; which is that which only entitles us to his Favour and the Mercies of the Gospel. Now that Children might not be excluded out of this Covenant, or depriv'd of the Privileges of it, for their Inability to promise for themselves the Conditions requir'd in it, God is graciously pleas'd to accept the Engagement of others in their stead, and to admit them into the Church, upon the Faith of their Parents and the Promises of their Sureties. This is an Instance of his fatherly Care and Tenderness to poor Infants, to consider their Impotence, and to assist their Weakness, and to receive them to Favour upon a vicarious Stipulation, till they are able to renew and make one of their own. Out of the Church there is ordinarily no Salvation, and therefore
that

that Infants may be put into the way that leads to it, they are receiv'd into it by others undertaking that for them which they cannot do for themselves; by which means they are taken into the Church before they leave the World, and we may presume of their Salvation, tho they die in their Infancy: which is no small Security to Children, and may be no small Comfort to their Parents.

But tho the Mercy of God allows this to be done for them in their Infancy, to render them capable of Admission into the Covenant, yet when they grow up to Years of Understanding, they are to undertake that in their own Persons which others engag'd in their behalf: for tho he dispense with some impossible Terms while they remain so, and will not exact from them what is not in their Power to perform; yet as soon as they become possible, that is, when they come to Years of Discretion, they justly may, and are expected from them. And this will lead me to observe,

2. The Wisdom and Piety of the Church, in exacting this Recognition from them, and bringing Children to take that upon themselves in their riper Years, which others promised for them in their Infancy. In this Question of the Catechism, whichevery baptiz'd Child is requir'd to learn and repeat in the Church, 'tis ask'd, *Dost thou think that thou art bound to believe and do as thy Sureties promis'd for thee?* To which they are taught to answer, *Yes verily, and by God's help so I will.* Where, as the Church in God's stead exacts this Acknowledgment from them, so do they, in the Presence of God and the Congregation, publicly own and declare their Assent and Consent to it; which must lay a mighty Obligation upon them ever after, to observe and perform the Conditions of this Baptismal Covenant.

Indeed, before and without this Vow, we all stand oblig'd by our Creation, to love, honour and obey our Maker; but yet this solemn Vow ties the Obligation the stronger upon us, and this publick Acknowledgment of it fastens it yet more, and makes it a threefold Cord, which *Solomon* tells us *is not easily broken.* This is a plain Instance of the Church's great Care for the Salvation and Happiness of all its Members; not only receiving them to all the Privileges of the New Covenant, but likewise letting them know the Duties and Conditions annex'd to them, requiring their Assent and Consent to them, and by all good Means fastning the Observance and Obligation upon them.

Moreover, this should engage Parents, not only to teach their Children the Catechism, but to bring them to say it before the Minister, that they may make this open and free Acknowledgment of their Vow, for the good Influence it may have upon their Lives; and Parents should often put their Children in mind of this publick Recognition, which may perhaps prove a Spur to Vertue, and a Curb from many a Vice.

But this is not all; for the more effectual Performance of this Vow, Children are here taught,

3. To declare their Purpose and Resolution of keeping it: The words, *Yes verily*, declare their owning and acknowledging the Obligation; and the following words, *by God's help so I will*, publish their Resolution of observing it. And indeed this is that which clinches the Nail, and drives home the Obligation upon them; for the bare owning or promising a thing is nothing without acting accordingly: 'Tis not enough to acknowledg that we are bound to believe and do what others have promis'd for us, unless we add our Resolution, and set about the doing of it, saying with *Joshua*, that whatever others do, *we will serve the Lord*, *Joshua 24. 15.*

By this we learn, that 'tis Action alone that adorns and crowns our Profession; *If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.* 'Tis not saying or promising, but doing only, that brings us to Happiness; *Neither Circumcision nor Uncircumcision* (saith the Apostle) *availeth anything, but a new Creature*, 1 Cor. 7. 19. 'Tis Newness of Life and Obedience that gives all the Efficacy to Baptism, and procures to us the Blessings of it; and therefore our Church directs Children to join good Purposes and Resolutions with their Acknowledgments, and to confirm their Promises by suitable Practices: without this, the most solemn Vows will prove rather Aggravations of our Sin, than the Instruments of Holiness, and consequently will tend more to increase our Misery, than add to our Happiness. *Better is it* (saith Solomon) *that thou shouldst not vow, than that thou shouldst vow and not pay*, Eccles. 5. 5. 'Tis a less fault not to vow at all, than having vow'd, not to perform; the one being a Neglect, the other a Contempt of the Divine Majesty: and as nothing sinks deeper than Contempt, so nothing can draw after it a heavier Judgment than the Violation of a Vow.

For this reason it is, that our Church exacts from all baptized Persons this solemn owning of their Vow, and likewise tacks to it a publick Declaration of their Will and Purpose to observe it:

it: for when they are ask'd, Whether they take themselves bound by the baptismal Vow to act according to it? they are bid to reply, Yes verily, and by God's help so they will. Where,

Lastly, They are directed to the best way and means to enable them to perform it; and that is by imploring of God's help; *By God's help so I will*: this is necessary to be invoc'd in all our daily and common Affairs, but much more in the great and weighty Matters of Religion. We must be always sensible of our own Inability to help our selves, and live in a constant dependance upon the Aid and Assistance of our Maker; this way we may rationally expect his Favour and Blessing, because he has directed us to it, and our own Imbecillity and Weakness requires it: but to trust to our own Strength, is to rely upon a broken Reed, that will not only fail our Expectations, but pierce us too with many Sorrows. God Almighty leaves those to themselves that depend upon their own Strength, by which means they fall into many Enormities, and meet with nothing but Disappointment and a Curse; but he delights to bless and assist those that call and depend upon him, and has promis'd never to leave or forsake such as in an humble performance of their Duty put their trust in him. And therefore we find St. James blaming those who spake too confidently of themselves in the smallest matters; Jam. 4. 13, 14. *Go to now, ye that say, To day or to morrow we will go into such a City, and continue there a Year, and buy, and sell, and get Gain*; advising them to say rather, *if the Lord will, we shall live, and do this or that*. Where he shews both the folly and the danger of neglecting God, and trusting to our selves in the slightest things. Sutable hereunto, our Church teaches Children to know where all their Strength lies, and to whom they ought to have recourse for it in all, but especially in the great Concerns of their Souls; directing them to say, *by God's help so I will*.

To conclude this Point, let us frequently call to mind what was done and promis'd for us in our Baptism; and as we have since own'd, so let us still endeavour to answer the Obligation, by *denying all Ungodliness and worldly Lusts, and living righteously, soberly and godly, in this present World*. Without this, we deny the Faith, and are worse than Infidels; and instead of renouncing the Devil and all his Works, shall renounce Christ and all his Religion; and must necessarily forfeit all the Benefits of Baptism. Yea, without leading a holy Life, we shall be found Covenant-breakers, and guilty of the Violation of the most solemn and sa-

cred Vows; and thereby incur the Punishment, not only of faithless Servants, but of false and perfidious Renegadoes. To prevent which,

Let us remember, that what was done for us in our Infancy, in our Name, and for our Benefit, lies upon us after to perform: 'Tis a Rule in Law and Equity, what a Man doth by another, is to be reckon'd as done by himself; if I depute another to seal a Bond for me, his Act binds me as fast, as if it were done immediately by my self. A learned Catechist hath truly observ'd, *That a Stipulation of others for an Infant, where it is to his Benefit, bindeth not only in the Gifts, but in the annexed Duties; if a Child have a Hand to take a beneficial Lease, he must find a Hand to pay the Rent and perform the Covenants, without which he justly forfeits it.*

This is our Case, we are put in a capacity of Heaven's vast and unspeakable Benefits, by the Engagements of others in our behalf: these now lie upon us to perform, in which if we perform our part, we cannot fail to receive them; otherwise, if we neglect it, 'twill be our folly as well as misery to go without them, especially having often own'd and recogniz'd the Obligation.

In a word, Having made, and frequently renew'd those Vows of Repentance and new Obedience, let us be all mindful of them, and say with *David, I will perform my Vows.* 'Twas an atheistical Speech of him, who affirm'd it beneath him to be fetter'd by a Promise, or made a slave to his Word; this falls short of the common Honesty of the Heathens, who ever held Vows and Promises to be sacred, and have been careful to observe them, tho with the hazard of their Lives. Religion teaches us not to fail of our Promises, tho it be to our own hurt; How much more ought we to observe this, which tends so much to our great good? always saying, as our Church here has taught us, *Yes verily, and by God's help so I will.*

DISCOURSE XVII.

Rom. 7. 25. *I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

I Have spoken of that solemn Recognition or Renewal of the baptismal Vow, which every baptized Person is call'd upon to make, when he comes to Years of understanding, in those words, *Yes verily, and by God's help so I will*; where he owns himself bound by what others engag'd for him, and declares his Purpose and Resolution to perform it. The better to enable him hereunto, the Church directs him,

Secondly, To make a thankful Acknowledgment to God of that happy State he is hereby call'd to, in those words, *And I thank our heavenly Father, who hath called me to this state of Salvation, through Jesus Christ our Saviour.*

Of this I shall treat at this time, from these words of St. Paul, *I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.* In the Epistle to the *Corinthians* he thanks God for *the Grace given to us by Jesus Christ*, 1 Cor. 1. 4. in his Epistle to *Timothy*, for *Grace to enable him to the Work whereunto he was called*; all which amount to a grateful Commemoration of the Mercies and Blessings convey'd to us by our Baptism.

In explaining then this Branch of the Catechism, I must consider,

First, The Duty of Thankfulness, together with the Object of it, in those words, *I heartily thank our heavenly Father.*

Secondly, The particular Matter for which this Thanks is directed to be paid, and that is, for his *calling us to this state of Salvation.*

Thirdly, The Means by which this Mercy is obtained, and that is *through Jesus Christ our Saviour.* I begin with

The Duty of Thankfulness, together with the Object to whom it is to be paid, *I heartily thank our heavenly Father.*

Thankfulness in general, is a grateful Sense of Benefits receiv'd: it includes in it sundry Acts and outward Expressions, of which *David*, that great Master of Thanksgivings, has given us many

Precepts, and likewise set before us an excellent Example. I shall mention some of them; as,

1. Thankfulness implies the frequent considering, remembering, and calling to mind of Benefits receiv'd; *Who so is wise, will consider these things*, saith the Psalmist. For himself, he says, *I will remember thy Wonders of old, and will meditate of all thy Works*, Psal. 77. 11, 12. Indeed, where the Mind is possess'd with a grateful Sense of any Favour or Benefit, it will necessarily engage the Thoughts to consider it; 'twill make us faithfully to retain, and frequently recollect the Loving-kindness: he that slightly regards, or easily forgets a Benefit, can by no means be reckon'd a grateful Person. And therefore we find the *Israelites* sharply rebuk'd, for not considering the Works of the Lord, and forgetting the Wonders he had done for them: *They remembered not his Hand*, says David, *nor the Day when he deliver'd them from their Enemies*, Psal. 78. 11, 42. *Yea, of the Rock that begat them they were unmindful, and forgot the God that formed them*, Deut. 32. 18. Some mens Memories, like the Water, bear up light and trivial matters, whilst weighty things sink to the bottom, and are lost in oblivion.

Aristotle being ask'd, what soonest grows old, answer'd, *Thanks*; and another tells us, *That no sooner is the Courtesy born, but the Resentment of it dies*. This is a vile, and yet too common a piece of Ingratitude, to let even the Mercies of God pass away unobserv'd, and the Sense of them sink into utter forgetfulness. To prevent which, let us often refresh our Memorys with the remembrance of the divine Goodness, and call upon our Souls in the words of the Psalmist, *Bless the Lord, O my Soul, and forget not all his Benefits*.

2. Thankfulness implies, not only the Remembrance, but a due Esteem and Valuation of Benefits. A Man may remember a thing, and yet think but slightly of it; and he that doth so, can never be truly thankful: for according to the Opinion or Esteem we have of Benefits, such will our Gratitude be. He that knows not the Value of a Pearl or a Diamond, will give little or no Thanks for it; yea, he will be apt to despise it, and with the Cock in the Fable will prefer a Barly-corn before a Jewel. If we set none, or a low Price, upon the Mercies of God, our Gratitude will be mean and despicable; and therefore we find David, the great Pattern of Gratitude, still magnifying the Mercies of God, and enhancing the Value of all his Blessings: *I will praise*

the Lord (saith he) for his Mercy is great, his Truth reacheth unto the Heavens, and his Faithfulness unto the Clouds, Psal. 108. 3, 4. And elsewhere, The Works of the Lord are great, sought out of all that have any Pleasure therein, Psal. 111. 2. Indeed, the Mercies of God are so great, that we cannot set any Value upon them, without undervaluing them; their Dimensions are larger than our Comprehension, and therefore, instead of measuring them, we are, with our devout Thanksgiver, to break out frequently into Wonder and Astonishment, saying with him, O Lord our Governour, how excellent is thy Name in all the World!

3. Thankfulness implies farther, a due Acknowledgment of Favours, and the Obligation that results from them. This is such a known piece of Gratitude, that they who neglect it, are by all men judg'd to be highly Ungrateful; he that cannot find a Tongue to acknowledg, what others find a Hand to reach out to him, justly forfeits all farther Title to Favour, and may be truly branded with the infamous Mark of Ingratitude. The least Homage we can pay to Almighty God, is, to acknowledg his Favors; and where there is a thankful Heart, it will appear in those Fruits of the Lips: *I have not hid thy Righteousness in my Heart (says David) my Talk hath been of thy Faithfulness and thy Salvation; I have not conceal'd thy Loving Kindness and Truth from the great Congregation, Psal. 40. 10. This will please the Lord (saith he) better than an Ox or a Bullock, that hath Horns and Hoofs. The Calves of the Lips are more acceptable to him, than all the Calves in the Stall; and a Mouth open'd to shew forth his Praise, is more pleasing than Sacrifices or Burnt-Offerings.*

Lastly, Thankfulness implies all possible Endeavours of Requitall and Satisfaction. Hence Gratitude has been ever reckon'd a Branch of natural Justice, for every Benefit lays a Debt upon us, which Gratitude requires to repay: *What shall I render unto the Lord (says the Psalmist) for all his Benefits?* And the same is the Language of every thankful Heart, which is ever willing to make all the Returns it can to the divine Goodness. And because the Mercies of God exceed all Requitall, he resolves with David, *to take the Cup of Salvation, and to call upon the Name of the Lord; but above all, to pay his Vows in the presence of all his People, and declare his willingness to serve and exalt him, Psal. 116. 12, 13, 14.*

Thus we see the Nature of Thankfulness, or what is imply'd in the Vertue of Gratitude, the Object whereof, our Catechism
here

here tells us, is our heavenly Father; *I heartily thank our heavenly Father.* Tho some sorts and degrees of Thanks may be given unto Men, as the Instruments of divine Providence, and the immediate Agents or Occasions of some Good to us; yet our primary and principal Thanks is due to God only, who gives them all the Power or opportunity of doing Good, either to themselves or others: and therefore, *Not unto us* (saith the Psalmist) *not unto us, but to thy Name be all the Praise.*

Bnt what is the particular Mercy or Blessing, for which we are here directed to pay our Tribute of Thanksgiving? That is the

Second thing to be spoken to, which shews, that we are heartily to thank our heavenly Father for calling us into this state of Salvation.

By this state of Salvation here, we are to understand that happy Condition into which we are receiv'd by our Baptism; by virtue whereof, being admitted into Covenant with God, we are put into a safe way of Salvation, and cannot miss of it, upon performing the Conditions requir'd in it. Before this our reception into the Church, we were in a state of Enmity and Alienation from God, being Strangers from the Covenant of Promise, without God, and without Christ, and so without Hope in the World; in this forlorn Estate we must have all perish'd without remedy, being under the Wrath of God, and the heavy Sentence of eternal Damnation: But by the Grace and Mercy of this second Covenant, the first Covenant of Works was cancel'd, the Hand-writing of Ordinances that was against us was blotted out, and we restor'd to this state of Salvation.

This is the Mercy for which we are directed heartily to *thank our heavenly Father*; who had Compassion on our miserable and helpless Estate, and employ'd both his Wisdom and Goodness to rescue us from it: yea, he has not only turn'd away his Wrath, but receiv'd us into Favour, and put us into a Condition, if we please our selves, to be made eternally happy. This is that state of Salvation, into which we are all admitted at our entrance upon Christianity, the Conditions whereof are not only easy and rational, but naturally qualifying and preparatory thereto, as has been in some measure shew'd already, and will hereafter more fully appear.

That

That this is worth our most hearty Thanks to our heavenly Father, will be obvious to any that will but seriously consider, either the greatness of the Miseries we are hereby deliver'd from, or the greatness of the Mercies we are hereby restor'd to; both which are too great to be conceiv'd, and much more to be express'd by us.

This happy Translation then from Wo to Bliss, yea from Death to Life, deserves and calls for our greatest Thankfulness, which must be express'd too in all the foremention'd Acts of Gratitude. As,

1. We are frequently to entertain our selves with the thoughts of this unmerited Love of our heavenly Father, and make it a part of our daily Meditation; for when we had justly forfeited his Favour, and became Enemies to him by evil Works, he was pleas'd to be reconcil'd unto us: and because we could not effect this of our selves, he thought fit to contrive for us the means of our Reconciliation; this is never to be forgotten by us, but we are still to have this his great Goodness in remembrance.

2. We are not only to remember, but to set a high Price and Value upon this inestimable Favour. To be translated from a state of Death and Damnation, to which we were doom'd by the first Covenant, to a state of Life and Salvation, to which we are restored by the second, is a Mercy never enough to be valued by us. A redeem'd Captive highly prizes his Liberty, and a condemn'd Traitor is transported with Joy at the News of a Pardon: these are poor Resemblances of a deliverance from eternal Death to everlasting Life, and faintly set forth our Translation from a miserable Bondage to Sin and Satan, to the glorious Liberty of the Sons of God; which therefore require our highest Esteem and our utmost Thanks. To this we are to add moreover,

Our frequent Acknowledgments of these signal Acts of the divine Goodness. Our Catechism here teaches every one to own his invaluable Privilege, of being call'd to this state of Salvation, without which we had for ever remain'd miserable; and being a Mercy as much beyond our Power as above our Merits, calls for our loudest Praises and Thanksgivings: a grateful Sense whereof ought not only to live in our Hearts, but to discover it self in our Lips; often saying with the Psalmist, *O that Men would praise the Lord for his Goodness, and declare the Wonders that he doth for the Children of Men!*

Lastly,

Lastly, We should express our Thanks to our heavenly Father, by making all the Returns we can for his unspeakable Goodness. Now because our Righteousness extends not to him, nor can our highest Praises make any the least Addition to his essential Glory, therefore he is pleas'd to accept of our hearty Desires of serving him. To Obey is better than Sacrifice, and no Incense is so savory in his Nostrils as that which comes from a broken and contrite Heart: *Whoso offereth Praise (saith God) honoureth me; and to him that ordereth his Conversation aright, will I shew the Salvation of God.*

But how is this great Mercy obtain'd for us? That our

Third Particular will tell us, was through Jesus Christ our Saviour; *I heartily thank our heavenly Father, who hath called me to this state of Salvation, through Jesus Christ our Saviour.* Now this is owing to Jesus Christ upon a double account:

1. Because 'twas purchas'd for us by his Merits. And,
2. 'Tis granted to us by his Mediation.

1. I say, we are call'd to this state of Salvation through Jesus Christ, because he alone by his Merits purchas'd it for us. The breach of the first Covenant rendred all Mankind guilty before God, by means whereof we all come into the World Children of Wrath and Disobedience, and doom'd to a state of eternal Perdition. But God Almighty took pity on our Condition, and found out a Remedy for us, when we could neither think of, or effect any for our selves; and that was, by sending his Son to die for us, whose Blood was of Value sufficient to atone for the Sins of the whole World: by this, he not only satisfy'd divine Justice, but merited a new and better Covenant, into which we are enter'd by Baptism, the Seal of it; by receiving whereof, we are here said to be call'd to a state of Salvation through Jesus Christ, who both merited the Privilege, and instituted the Rite of Initiation into it.

2. This state of Salvation was not only purchas'd by the Merits, but granted by the Mediation of Jesus Christ; and so we may be truly said to be call'd to it, in and through him. There is one Mediator (says the Apostle) between God and Men, *The Man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all*, 1 Tim. 2. 5. By the shedding his precious Blood, he obtain'd milder and easier Terms for us; and having fulfil'd the first Covenant in his own Person, he did away that, and establish'd the Second; for
which

which reason he is said to be the Mediator of a better Covenant, establish'd upon better Promises, Heb. 8. 6.

In a word: As none was so proper to intercede for us with the Father as his own Son, who likewise took our Nature to atone for our Sins, and was in all things (Sin only excepted) made like unto us; so none but He was sufficient to effect it, who by the Greatness and Divinity of his Person was alone able to pacify the divine Anger, and procure Peace and Reconciliation for us.

By which we see, not only infinite Goodness, but infinite Wisdom too, in the Contrivance of Man's Recovery to this State of Salvation; which was effected only by the Merits and Mediation of Jesus Christ our Saviour.

Upon the whole then, We have infinite Reason to thank, not only God the Father for contriving, but God the Son too for undertaking and accomplishing, the Work of Man's Redemption. *God so loved the World (saith St. John) that he gave his only begotten Son; and his only begotten Son so lov'd the World, that he gave himself; that whosoever believeth on him, should not perish, but obtain eternal Life, John 3. 16.*

Hereby he has obtain'd eternal Redemption for us, and is become the Author of eternal Salvation, upon milder Terms than it could be had before: perfect and unfinning Obedience, which was out of our Power, being exchang'd for Sincerity, and doing our Utmost; and this too secur'd to us by the Word and Promise of Him, who is Truth it self, and has thereby bound himself by Contract and Agreement to do that for us, which otherwise we could never claim or expect. Yea, the Apostle tells us, *That God willing more abundantly to shew to the Heirs of Promise the immutability of his Counsel, confirm'd it by an Oath; that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lye, we might have strong Assurance and Consolation, Heb. 6. 17, 18, &c.*

But that which affords greater matter of Thankfulness, is, that these Mercies are not promis'd in general, but apply'd to every particular Member of the Church, who are here taught to say in the singular Number, *I thank our heavenly Father, who hath called me, &c.*

Moreover, Farther to enhance our Gratitude, we may note this to be a peculiar and distinguishing Favour; for the fallen Angels were wholly past by and neglected, who instead of being restor'd to a State of Salvation, are reserv'd in Chains of Darkness to the Judgment of the Great Day, Jude 6. Heb. 2. 15.

R

Yea,

Yea, even among Mankind, the Heathen World of old, and many barbarous Nations still, never heard of this Call to a State of Salvation, but are left to grope in Darkness; and if any of them find the way to Life, it must be with great hazard and uncertainty. However that be, 'tis neither our Duty nor Discretion to enquire or determin any thing of their final State. Our way lies plain before us, and we shall assuredly fare worse than they, if we are not careful to walk in it.

To conclude, We see here abundant matter of Praise and Thanksgiving, and how fitly our Church hath taught every baptiz'd Person to say, *I thank our heavenly Father, who hath called me, &c.*

DISCOURSE XVIII.

Psalm 5. latter part of the 2d Verse. *Unto thee will I pray.*

I AM yet upon the Fourth Question and Answer of the Catechism; in which the Catechumen having solemnly own'd the Obligation of his baptismal Vow, and likewise made a thankful Acknowledgment of the many and great Benefits receiv'd thereby (both which have been spoken to) he is,

In the Last place directed to pray to God, to be enabled to continue in that happy State, into which he is by this means admitted, in those words, *And I pray unto God to give me his Grace, that I may continue in the same unto my Life's end.*

In handling of which Words I must consider,

First, The Act or Duty of Prayer, together with the Object to whom it is directed; *I pray unto God; or, Unto thee will I pray.*

Secondly, The particular Matter here pray'd for, viz. *to give me his Grace.*

Thirdly, The End or Design of it, *that I may continue in the same to my Life's End.* Of each of which something distinctly. And,

First, For the Act or Duty of Prayer. That may be defin'd to be a pious Address of the Heart and Soul to God, with a due
* Sense.

Sense of the divine Majesty, and an humble Dependance upon him for the supply of all our Wants; where 'tis stil'd,

1. An Address of the Heart, 'tis not a Business of the Tongue, as some would have it, or a matter of Words, as too many make it; who put themselves and others upon the daily Study and Invention of new Words for the same Things; but a Work of the Heart, and consists in the inward Desires and Breathings of the Soul after God. 'Twas the mistake of the Heathens, to think they should be heard for their much speaking; and the Folly of the Pharisees, to place their Religion in long Prayers. And 'tis no less a Weakness of some in our days, who think that God Almighty is taken with the Multitude, the Novelty, and Variety of Expressions; and therefore in all their Prayers, labour hard to address to him in new Words. Whereas God neither regards any, nor many Words, he hears the silent Language of the Heart, and answers the secret Sighs and Breathings of a devout Soul; and to prevent many Words, he has expressly charg'd, *that our Words unto him should be few*, Eccl. 5. 2. So that the great Work and Business of Prayer lies in the Heart, which is the only true Seat of all Devotion.

2. I stile it an Address of the Heart and Soul to God; and this teaches us the sole Object to whom our Prayers are to be directed, *viz.* not to Saints or Angels, or the Virgin Mary, as the manner of some is, but to God only; for 'tis written, *Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him Only shalt thou serve*, Mat.

4. He has stil'd himself *a God hearing Prayer, and therefore to him alone must all Flesh come*.

3. Prayer must be accompany'd with a due sense of the divine Majesty; that is, not only with a sense of his infinite Greatness and Perfections, to beget in us the greater Awe and Reverence in our Approaches to him, but more particularly of his infinite Power and Ability to help us; and likewise, of his infinite Readiness and Willingness to grant what according to his Will we shall ask of him. We are to address to the divine Majesty, with a grateful Sense of the Mercies we have already receiv'd; and that will both encourage him to give, and us to expect more, as our Necessities shall require.

Lastly, Our addressing to God in Prayer, must be attended with an humble dependance upon him for the supply of all our wants. This is a necessary Ingredient of an acceptable and successful Prayer, which must be offer'd up with a deep sense of our

wants, and of our own Inability to supply them; as also with a firm reliance upon the Power, Truth, and Faithfulness of Him we apply to for the relief of them. This is to ask in Faith, and a full assurance of being heard; which adds an Efficacy, and procures an Answer to our Prayers.

Without this, we shall come wavering in Doubts and Uncertainties; still questioning either his Power or his Will, or both, to help us, which will mar the success of all our Petitions: *For let not that Man think (saith St. James) that he shall receive any thing of the Lord. A double-minded Man is unstable in all his ways, and will be unsuccessful in all his requests, James 1. 7, 8.*

Thus we see the Act or Duty of Prayer, which the Church here directs, and the Catechumen promises to offer unto God, in those words, *And I pray unto God.* But,

Secondly, What is the particular Matter here directed to be pray'd for? Why that is for Grace to enable him to perform his Vow; *I pray unto God to give me his Grace, &c.*

By Grace here we are to understand, not any such extraordinary Assistance as may supersede the Use of Means, or render our own Endeavours needless, but a super-added Strength to our natural Faculties, to help our Infirmities, and make our Endeavours effectual: for God's bestowing his Grace, is only his affording some spiritual Aid to our natural Powers, not his creating any new Habit in an instant: he does not now over-power our Faculties, nor influence our Souls by any irresistible Motions of his holy Spirit; but he graciously seconds our Endeavours, and furthers us with his Blessing in the use of all good Means. And therefore we are requir'd to do our part, by exerting the utmost of our Abilities; and where they fail, they shall be supply'd, and supported too, by the Succours of divine Grace. Hence, tho God is said *to work all our Works in us and for us, and to work in us to will and to do according to his good Pleasure*; yet we are call'd upon *to work out our own Salvation*, to signify, that we are to use the natural Powers which God has given us, and to co-operate with him as far as they will reach towards our own Salvation. And when we thus do our best, he will supply what is wanting by the Assistance of his Grace, and crown all our Actions with Success and Victory. God Almighty delights to bless our Endeavours, and ever meets and encourages them with the desir'd Issue; but he dashes the vain Expectations of the slothful and negligent; and

and an idle superficial asking, instead of a Blessing, brings only Disappointment and a Curse. Hence our Blessed Saviour joins Watchfulness with Prayer; *Watch and Pray*, saith he, *that ye enter not into Temptation*, Mat. 26. 41. thereby teaching us, that moral Industry in the use of all good means, is necessary to procure an Answer, and prevail for the gracious Return of our Prayers. This Lesson we are taught in that Divine Form which Christ himself gave to his Disciples, in which tho we are directed to pray for our daily Bread, yet our Labour must accompany our Petitions, or else 'tis but vanity and presumption to expect it. In like manner, tho we are taught to pray against our Ghostly Enemies, and to be deliver'd from their Temptations, yet we are bid to resist the Devil before he will fly from us; and we must strive against Sin in all its Motions and Occasions, or else our striving against it in Prayer will be of no avail.

Our Petitions then for Grace are to be attended ith the other great Instruments of Religion, such as Reading, Hearing, Meditating on God's Word, together with all other Exercises of Vertue and a holy Life, without which the loudest and longest Prayer will find neither Audience nor Acceptance. I have insisted the more on this, to rectify a dangerous mistake of some, who fondly imagine that Christ has done all for them, and expects nothing but their Acceptance of what he has done; his Grace is free, say they, and is not clog'd with any Conditions, so that 'tis but ask and have, tho they do nothing towards it.

This is a Delusion of Satan, or a false Suggestion of a corrupt and deceitful Heart, and will necessarily deprive such of all Grace and Favour at God's Hand, who harbour or lead their Lives by it; for God requires our Endeavours to go along with our Prayers, and will surely turn the deaf Ear to the latter, where the former are wanting.

Thus you see what is meant here by Grace, and likewise how it is to be pray'd for, in order to the obtaining of it. But,

Thirdly, For what end is the Catechumen here directed to pray for God's Grace? That Our Third particular will inform us, which is, that he may be enabled to continue in that State of Salvation, into which by Baptism he is receiv'd, unto his Life's end: So that 'tis Perseverance or holding out to the end that is here made the Subject of our Prayers; which is a matter highly worthy of our Prayers, and likewise absolutely necessary to be pray'd for.

1. I say, Grace to persevere to the end, is a matter highly worthy of our most hearty and affectionate Prayers; for 'tis this alone that crowns our Actions, and procures for us the promis'd Reward: *We shall reap*, saith the Apostle, *if we faint not*, Gal. 6. 9. If we hold out to the end of our Christian Race, we shall surely obtain the Prize; but if we faint and tire, we shall reap nothing but Shame and Confusion. We must be faithful unto Death, before we receive the Crown of Life; and 'tis they only who by patient continuance in well doing seek for Glory, that shall receive Eternal Life.

The *Psalmist* tells us of some that start aside like a broken Bow; and of others that reel and stagger like a drunken Man, and seem by their Fickleness and Instability to be at their Wit's end. This kind of Levity and Inconstancy we find sharply rebuk'd in the *Galatians*, Chap. 3. where the Apostle asks, *Who had bewitched them, that they should start from the Faith which they had embraced?* And why they became so foolish, as having begun in the Spirit, they should end in the Flesh?

This then being a matter of such vast Consequence to us, our Eternal Happiness and Salvation intirely depending upon our holding out to the End; it highly concerns us to pray for Grace to be enabled so to do.

2. Again, as this is a matter highly worthy of our Prayers, so our Prayers are absolutely necessary to the obtaining of it; for besides our natural Weakness, we are beset with so many and such strong Temptations, that without the assistance of Divine Grace 'twill be impossible for us to persevere, which we are therefore to call for by diligent Prayer. Our Saviour pray'd that *St. Peter's Faith might not fail*, which was greatly in danger by the Siftings and Assaults of Satan: And ours would daily and hourly fail too, without the continual Succours and Supplies of Divine Grace; and therefore we have continual need to pray, that we may be kept by the Power of God through Faith unto Salvation, *1 Pet. 1. 5.* So that Perseverance is a Vertue, which not only deserves, but needs our earnest and fervent Prayers. Again,

Lastly, As Prayer is the most necessary, so is it the most natural and proper means of obtaining this Grace: for it betokens that Humility and Dependance upon God, which highly tends to the Success of our Petitions; it shews a sense of our own Inability, for no Man will seek to another for that which he knows

or

or thinks he can do for himself. Moreover, 'tis an acknowledgment of the infinite Power, Fulness, and Sufficiency of God to help us, and likewise of his readiness to do it; which will powerfully engage him to do that for us which we cannot do for our selves.

Indeed, Prayer is the ordinary way and means of obtaining all that at God's Hand, which may be necessary or convenient for us: hence some have stil'd it, The Key that opens to us the Gates of Heaven; others, The Wing upon which the Soul mounts up thither, and returns loaden with all necessary Blessings. 'Tis the means which God himself has appointed to that end, and therefore he will not fail to bless it: *Call upon me, saith he, in the time of Trouble, and I will hear thee, and thou shalt praise me, Psal. 50. Open thy Mouth wide and I will fill it.*

He has made Prayer the Condition of all his Blessings; and therefore we find him declaring to the Israelites, *That tho he had promis'd to bestow upon them many Mercys and Blessings, yet he expected to be sought unto, and to be called upon for them, Ezek. 36. 27, 37.*

For this reason it is, that our Church directs all that are by Baptism admitted into it, to pray to God, as for all other Blessings, so especially for Grace to continue in his Ways to their Lives end: *If any of you lack Wisdom (saith St. James) that is, Grace or Wisdom to persevere, for so Wisdom must be understood in that place, let him ask it of God, who giveth to all Men liberally, and upbraideth not, and it shall be given unto him, James 1. 5.*

Where we have abundant Encouragement to address for this Grace, from the happy Issue and Success of our Petitions: It shall be given unto us. God Almighty is never wanting to the hearty Desires and Endeavours of his People; and if we are not wanting to our selves, we cannot miss of Grace sufficient for us: he is ever ready to hear and answer our Requests, and to bless our Endeavours with the desir'd Issue.

Wherefore let us not forget to pray daily unto God to give us Grace, to continue stedfast in our Christian Course to our Lives end. Thus are we here taught to pray for our selves, and elsewhere we are call'd upon to make our Prayers to Almighty God in the behalf of every Child who is baptiz'd, that he may lead the rest of his Life according to that beginning.

To

To this end, let us frequently and seriously consider both the Danger of Apostacy, and the Happiness of Perseverance.

For the First; Unexpressibly great is the danger of Apostacy or revolting from God, who has threatned all such Backsliders with *Eternal Destruction from the Presence of the Lord, and the Glory of his Power.* Better had it been (saith St. Peter) not to have known the Ways of Righteousness, than having known them, to turn from the holy Commandment, 1 Pet. Such will be glad at the last Day, to change Places in Hell with a Turk or an Infidel, who will find a more easy and tolerable Doom than those perfidious Renegadoes; such Baseness will heat the Furnace seven times hotter, and prepare those flaming Ingredients of Wrath, that will heighten and increase their Damnation.

But as the Doom and Danger of Apostates is unspeakable, so the Happiness of sound persevering Christians is unconceivable: *To him that overcometh* (saith the Spirit) *will I give to eat of the Tree of Life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God,* Rev. 2. 7. They that overcome the Difficulties of Christianity, and hold on the Profession of it in Sincerity to the end, shall be restor'd to a far better Paradise than that which our first Parents lost; where the Tree of Life will render, not only their Persons immortal, but their Bliss indefeasible: there will be no Serpent to beguile them, no Cherubims to guard the way to the Tree of Life, nor any flaming Sword to drive or keep them from it; but contrariwise, as there is nothing to bereave them of their Innocency, so neither can any thing hinder or impair their Happiness: Insomuch, that if we are faithful to the Death, we shall be sure to receive a Crown of Life; a Crown that can neither be forfeited nor eclips'd, but shall sit for ever on our Heads, and shine there with a bright and never-fading Lustre.

In a word, They that persevere in the Ways of Vertue to the end, shall be crown'd at last with endless Glory and Felicity.

A
PRACTICAL EXPOSITION
OF THE
SECOND PART
OF THE
Church-Catechism:

CONTAINING
The *APOSTLES CREED*,
The *TEN COMMANDMENTS*,
And the *LORD's PRAYER*.

*Jude, Verse the 3d. Contend earnestly for the Faith that
was once deliver'd to the Saints.*

Printed in the Year 1707.

INTERNATIONAL EXPOSITION

1876

Philadelphia

THE WORLD'S EXHIBITION

OF 1876

AND THE FORD, P. R. N. E.

THE FORD, P. R. N. E.

THE FORD, P. R. N. E.

Printed in the Year 1876

To the Right Reverend Father in God,

G E O R G E,

Lord Bishop of *Bath and Wells.*

My Lord!

THE following Discourses having receiv'd their Birth in your Lordship's Diocess, humbly present themselves for your Lordship's Blessing, which will give them the greater Grace, and make them appear abroad with better success.

The Subject treated of in the Second Part of the Catechism is, the Three great Models of the Christian Religion, the Creed, the Commandments, and the Lord's Prayer; which are that Form of sound words, we are commanded to hold fast without wavering: the keeping whereof is that Sacred Depositum, committed first to the Charge of the Fathers, and by them to the Sons of the Church.

They who have laid aside the use of these Divine Forms in their Solemn Worship, as too many in our Age have unhappily done, are fallen into such a Giddiness and Instability in Religion, as to run into divers Sects and

Partys; who not receiving these Truths in the Love and Practice of them, have been given up to believe Lyes, and are carried away with strong Delusions.

To prevent these great Evils, all Christians are requir'd to learn and adhere to these Forms of sound Words, to preserve them from the Contagion of Errors and Heresies, and to secure them from all Corruptions both in Faith and Manners.

My Lord! what is here written on these excellent Models to those Ends, is humbly submitted to your Lordship's Candor and better Judgment, of whose Acceptance I cannot doubt from so kind and worthy a Diocesan.

That your Lordship may live long to be an Ornament to the Church, and a Support to the Clergy; and that your present Endeavours of that kind, may be crown'd with an ample and glorious Reward hereafter, is the hearty Prayer of,

My Lord!

Your Lordship's Obedient and Humbly
Devoted Servant,

Matth. Hole.

The Preface.

THE Reader upon the first sight of this Book, may be apt to say, *What! more Expositions of the Creed yet? Have we not already Bishop Pearson's, Dr. Barrow's, Dr. Towerson's, with many others, and what need can there be of any more? Is there any Addition to be made to the Creed, and are not all the Parts of it sufficiently explain'd?* I shall not reply to this, by making any Comparisons, which as in most Cases, so especially in this, would be very odious; nor shall I in any measure detract from the Honour due to those great Men, who have so highly oblig'd the World by their elaborate and learned Writings, and to whom I must own my self not a little beholden.

All that I shall say in answer to it is, that this may serve as an Epitome or brief Abridgment of their larger Volumes; that they who have neither Money to buy, nor leisure to read greater Books, may be hereby eas'd and assisted in both. Besides,

Some of the foremention'd Authors may perhaps be too profound and learned for vulgar Readers, who may be discourag'd from perusing what they find above their Capacity. Others may be too long, and thereby apt to weary and burden the Memories of weaker Persons. Others again may be too short, and so not so plain and practical as such a Divine Subject requires.

If I have done any thing towards a Remedy of these Inconveniences, and gone a middle way between the profoundness and prolixity of some, and the conciseness and obscurity of others, I hope the Reader will have no reason to complain; and whether it be so or no, I must leave him to judg. Moreover,

Having undertaken the Exposition of the Church Catechism, I could not answer the Design, nor fulfil my Task, if so great

and necessary a Part of it were omitted; which being the Foundation of the Christian Religion, ought to be well laid, in order to our being built up in our most Holy Faith: to which end I have endeavour'd to remove that Hay and Stubble which some have built thereupon, and likewise to preserve that Gold and precious Stone which alone is able to stand the Trial; that having this Touchstone of sound Doctrine always by us, we may be enabled to try the Spirits whether they be of God, and to continue steadfast in the Faith, in an Age wherein so many Errors are broach'd to infest and corrupt it.

If any by the ensuing Discourses shall be better enlighten'd in the Knowledg of Divine Truths, or more confirm'd in the Faith once deliver'd to the Saints, let him give God the Praise, and the Author his Prayers.

Farewel.

The Apostles Creed.

I Believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of Heaven and Earth:

And in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, Born of the Virgin Mary, Suffered under Pontius Pilate, Was crucified, dead and buried, He descended into Hell: The third day he rose again from the dead, he ascended into Heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty: From thence he shall come to judg the quick and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy Catholick Church; the communion of Saints; the forgiveness of Sins; the resurrection of the Body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

A Practical Exposition of the Second Part of the Church-Catechism.

DISCOURSE I.

2 Tim. i. 13. *Hold fast the Form of Sound Words, which thou hast heard of me, in Faith and Love, which is in Christ Jesus.*

HAVING in a former Treatise, explain'd the First part of the Church-Catechism, which contains the Baptismal Covenant; that is, the Blessings and Privileges promis'd and bestow'd on God's part in our Baptism, together with the Conditions engag'd to be perform'd on ours: I proceed in this to the Second part of the Catechism, which contains the particular Duties and Conditions of the Baptismal Vow. And because there can be no Failure on God's part, we are hereby directed in the right Performance of ours. Now the great Things requir'd to entitle us to the Benefits of our Baptism, are these three:

First, To believe aright, for which we have a Rule of Faith summ'd up in the *Apostles Creed*.

Secondly, To do aright, for which we have a Rule of Life and Manners, summ'd up in the Decalogue or *Ten Commandments*.

Thirdly, To pray aright, for which we have a Rule of Devotion, summ'd up in the *Lord's Prayer*. These three great Models of the Christian Religion, make up this second part of our Catechism, which being to be learnt and observ'd by all Christians in the whole Course of their Lives must be particularly handled and explain'd to us. Accordingly therefore I shall begin,

First,

First, With the Rule of Faith, that teaches to believe aright, which is summ'd up for us in the Apostles Creed; to this the fifth Question and Answer of the Catechism lead us, in which the Catechumen is bid to *rehearse the Articles of his Belief*.

The Answer whereunto is in the words of the Creed, *I believe in God, &c.* But before I enter upon the Explication of it, 'twill be requisite to premise something by way of Introduction, touching the Name, the Authority, and the Antiquity of this Creed; together with the Obligation that lies upon every baptiz'd Christian to retain and adhere to it: which I shall endeavor to do from these Words of the Apostle, *Hold fast the Form of Sound Words, which thou hast heard, &c.* Where I must enquire,

First, What we are to understand by this *Form of Sound Words*.

Secondly, How it was deliver'd, imply'd in those words, *Which thou hast heard of me*.

Thirdly, What is meant by *Holding it fast in Faith and Love, which is in Christ Jesus*. For the

First, By the *Form of Sound Words*, some understand the intire Body of the Holy Scriptures, which containing a perfect Revelation of Divine Truths may in a large sense be stil'd, *The Christians Creed*: But because the necessary points of Faith lie there dispers'd up and down, and are hardly distinguish'd by vulgar Minds from matters of lesser moment, it was thought requisite to compose such a brief Summary of the Fundamental Doctrines necessary to be believ'd in order to Salvation, as might be easily learnt and remembred by all concern'd to know them; and therefore this *Form of Sound Words* has been both by antient and modern Interpreters expounded of the Apostles Creed, which being a short, but compleat Model of the Christian Faith, is to be learnt and understood of all that are receiv'd by Baptism into the Christian Church.

And here for the better understanding of this excellent Model, we are first to consider the Name or Titles given to it, which from the first word of it, in Latin *Credo*, receiv'd the Name or Denomination of *Creed*; and from the same word in English, *I believe*, 'tis often stil'd *the Belief*: both which signify it to be a Summary of the Fundamental Articles of the Christian Faith. The Greek Name of it is *σύμβολον*, which has various Significations, and is suppos'd to be given to the Creed for different Reasons.

Some-

Sometimes it signifies a shot or share which every one of the Guests casts in towards a Reckoning or Entertainment: and some have thought this Name given to it, from each of the Apostle's contributing his Article towards the Composure, the whole consisting of twelve in number, according to the number of the twelve Apostles.

Sometimes it signifies a Bond, Contract or Agreement, or a Pledg and Earnest of a Bargain; for which Reason the Creed is said to be a Profession or Contract made in Baptism about the matter and measure of our Faith, wherein the several Articles of our Belief are so many Articles of our Covenant with God, from which if we recede, we break our Covenant, and forfeit all the Privileges of our Baptism.

Sometimes again this word is set to signify such a Token or Mark as is wont to pass between Friends and Allies, to procure for any the more kind and friendly Reception; and of this Nature and Use is or ought to be the Profession of the Creed in all Christian Churches, where whosoever brings this *Tessera* or Token with him, is to be receiv'd as a Brother; but *if any come and bring not this Doctrine*, St. John wills us *not to receive him into our Houses, nor to wish him God-speed*, 2 Epist. 10, 11. Again, this word *σύμβολον* is sometimes taken for a military Flag or Banner, by which Soldiers are known to what Captain or General they belong; and this very fitly futes the Creed, the Profession whereof is a Badg or Cognizance of a Soldier of Christ: it shews that we belong to him as the Captain and General of our Salvation, and that we fight under his Banner against his and our Enemies.

Lastly, *σύμβολον* is frequently taken for a Watch-word, whereby the Soldiers of an Army are known and distinguish'd from the Enemy: and this is very properly applied to the Creed, because the Profession thereof serves to distinguish Christians from Heathens, Hereticks, and all other Enemies of the Christian Faith. This for the Name; I proceed,

2ly. To consider the Authors and Authority of the Creed, and this hath been generally ascrib'd to the holy Apostles, which we have the same Reason to believe, as that the several Books of the holy Scriptures are to be ascrib'd to those Authors whose Names they bear, both being equally confirm'd by the concurrent Testimony of the Fathers, and deliver'd down by the Tradition of the Church in all Ages. Neither hath this been deny'd, or so much

much as doubted of by any before this late unhappy Age, in which some have call'd in question the very Articles of the Creed as well as the Authors of it; and the better to destroy the Credit of the one, have labour'd hard to undermine the Authority of the other. And yet they who have thus attempted to shake the Authority of the Creed, have never ventur'd to assign any other Authors, tho the Authors of all the other Creeds are well known, and we can assign by what Fathers and Councils they were compos'd; yet this excellent Compendium, which is the Foundation of all the other, hath never been ascrib'd to any but the holy Apostles: and therefore it was wisely and worthily said of the Royal Martyr King *Charles* the First, I shall believe that the Apostles Creed was made by them (such Reverence I bear to the Churches Tradition) until other Authors be certainly found out. 5th Paper to *Henderson*.

3ly. For the Antiquity of the Creed, or the Time of its Composition; this hath been justly suppos'd to be more antient than the Writings of the Apostles, who in many of their Epistles seem to refer to it.

Now the Account which *Ruffinus* and many other Fathers give of the Time, Manner, and Reason of this Composition, is briefly this, viz. After the Ascension of our blessed Saviour into Heaven, and the Descent of the Holy Ghost that follow'd thereupon, the Apostles were both inabl'd and sent to preach the Gospel to the most remote and barbarous Nations. And being qualify'd for, and authoriz'd to this Charge, before their Departure from *Jerusalem* to their several Provinces, they assembled together, and by Assistance from above compil'd and agreed upon this brief Summary, as a constant and uniform Rule of Faith to all their Auditories, that both they might preach, and others hear the same Truths in Places where they came.

This is hinted at by the Apostles in sundry Places of their Epistles; *St. Paul* in his Epistle to the *Romans* styles it, *a Form of Doctrine which was deliver'd to them, and which they heartily receiv'd and obey'd*, Rom. 6. 17. In the 12th chapter, ver. 6. 'tis call'd *the Analogy or Proportion of Faith*: where, as *Beza* and other Expositors tell us, is a plain Reference to the Apostles Creed, which is there made the Rule not only of Faith, but Prophecy, and a standing Direction for the true Interpretation of Holy Scripture.

In his Epistle to the *Corinthians*, he calls it the *Milk* that is to be given to Babes in Christ, to prepare them to receive stronger

Meat, 1 Cor. 3. 2. in the same chapter verse 10. he stiles it *the Foundation*, which he as a Master-builder had laid, that others might build on to Perfection, and raise upon these Fundamentals the Structure of their Faith and Hopes of Salvation; withal cautioning them to *take heed what they builded thereupon*, viz. That they laid not upon it the *Hay and Stubble* of Errors and Divisions, but only the *Gold and precious Stones* of Unity and sound Doctrine: and they that do so, are said to *build upon the Foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief Corner Stone*.

In his Epistle to the *Ephesians*, it is call'd the *One Faith*, by which they were admitted to *One Baptism*, Eph. 4. 5. by which we are to understand this Form of sound Words, or Ground-work of the Christian Faith, which was to be receiv'd and rehears'd by all that were to be baptiz'd.

In the Epistle of *St. Jude* 'tis call'd the *Faith once deliver'd to the Saints*, ver. 3. that is, once for all, being handed down one and the same, in all Times, and to all Places and Persons.

In *St. Paul's* Epistle to the *Philippians*, he wills them to *walk by the same Rule*, and not only to *think*, but to *speak the same thing*, Phil. 3. 15, 16. meaning, that they should both live and believe by this Form of sound Words, and make the Creed the Rule of their Words and Actions.

In his Epistle to *Timothy*, in the next words to our Text, he stiles this Form of sound Words, *The Depositum or good Thing committed to his Charge*, which both *St. Chrysostom* and *St. Jerom* interpret of the Apostles Creed.

The Author to the *Hebrews* calls it, *The first Principles of the Oracles of God*, Heb. 5. 12. in the next chapter, *the Principles of the Doctrine of Christ, and the Foundation of Faith towards God, and the Resurrection of the Dead*, Heb. 6. 1.

All which, by the unanimous Consent of the most learned Men, are to be understood of this Rule of Faith, compriz'd and deliver'd down to us in the Apostles Creed.

But why did the Apostles compile this Rule of Faith, and order it to be preserv'd and handed down to all Ages? Why, this was done chiefly for these two Reasons.

1. That it might serve as a Touchstone to try and examine all Doctrines by; for both Christ and his Apostles forewarn'd the Disciples of *false Teachers and false Prophets, that should arise in the latter days and deceive many*, of whom our Saviour wills them

to beware: And the Apostles caution them, *not to believe every Spirit, but to try the Spirits whether they be of God*, i John 4.1. And because we should not want a Rule to try them by, they have left us this Touchstone, to which we are to bring them, and if they speak not according to this, 'tis because there is no Truth in them; and therefore the Apostle wills us to reject any Doctrine that is contrary to this, tho it be preach'd and pretended to come from an Angel of Heaven. Accordingly we find the Fathers making this a Test or Mark of Distinction between Believers and Unbelievers; so that if any false Brother should creep in, he should, as a Father directs, be ask'd his Creed to see whether he be a Friend or a Foe, one that owns the Christian Faith, or an Infidel, and be receiv'd or rejected accordingly.

2. This Form of sound Words was compos'd to be a Bond, not only of Faith but Charity, to unite Christians in the Foundations of Religion, that they may be the better built up in their most Holy Faith, and edify'd in Love and Charity. Experience teaches us, that Religion hath a mighty Influence upon the Hearts and Lives of Men, in which Unity begets Peace and Love, whereas Hatred and Animosity are the natural Effects of Division; and 'tis evident that the Harmony of Faith and Worship is necessary to create a Harmony of Minds and Affections: For these among other Reasons it was, that the Apostles, not without the Aid and Assistance of the Holy Ghost, indited this Form of sound Words to be learn'd and receiv'd by all, that by Baptism are to be admitted into the Christian Church. And thus having shew'd what is meant by this Form of sound Words, together with the End and Reasons of its Compofure, I proceed

To the *Second* Thing to be consider'd in the Text, and that is the Manner of its delivery, contain'd in those words, *which thou hast heard of me*; whereby is signify'd, that this Creed was not deliver'd in Writing, but by word of Mouth, for *Timothy* is here said to learn it, not by seeing or reading, but hearing of it: and the Fathers generally tell us, that it was not committed to Writing in the first Ages, but deliver'd by Oral Tradition, for which they have left us sundry Reasons. As,

First, It was not put into Writing, lest it should fall into the hands of Heathens and Infidels, who would be apt to pervert and abuse it. Our Saviour would *not have Pearls to be cast before Swine, lest they trample upon and pollute them*; nor would he have *Childrens*

*

Bread;

Bread, or holy Things, given unto Dogs, who know not the worth of them: meaning, that the Mysteries of Christ's Religion should not be communicated to the Heathens, who were more apt to profane and deride, than to receive them; but like Mysteries should be kept secret from such Persons, and not made known to any, but to those who by Baptism were initiated into them. And therefore 'twas call'd the *Christian's Watch-word*, which we know is given by word of Mouth, and not in Writing, lest the Enemy should come to the knowledg of it. We find St. *Cyrl* giving a strict Charge to his Catechumens, not to divulge their Creed to any unbaptized Person: and the antient Martyrs could not by any Torments be brought to reveal it to any such, lest it should be profan'd or misconstrued; for which Reason it was not thought fit to commit it to writing, till the World became Christian. But ever since that happy Period, the Creed, which was before in a great measure kept secret, and communicated only to a few, became publick to all, written Copies were taken of it for the better preserving and propagating the Christian Faith, and were dispers'd every where for the Benefit and Edification of the Catholick Church: by which means it is come down safe and pure to our hands, with an Order to teach and learn it in all Churches, that the Members of them may all agree in the same sound Doctrine, and speak the same things in all their publick Confessions; to which end our Church hath order'd all Children to be train'd up in the Knowledg of it, and to be taught it in their Youth, that they may not depart from it in their old Age. This is the Form of sound Words, or the Profession of Faith which we are bid to *hold fast without wavering*, (Heb. 10. 23.) that is, to be so far from deserting, that we entertain not the least Doubt, nor enter into any Dispute about it; but take it for granted, and stand to it as the Basis of the Christian Faith, laying it as the Foundation of all our Hopes, and that upon which the whole Fabrick of our Religion and Salvation stands. But,

Lastly, What is it to hold fast this Form of sound Words in Faith and Love, which is in Christ Jesus? In answer to which, To hold it fast in Faith, is firmly and heartily to believe it, to yield our unfeigned Assent and Consent to the Truth of every part of it, to stand firm and steddy to it without shrinking or departing from it.

To hold it fast in Love, is to receive it into the Heart, to retain it in the Memory, and to make it the Object of our Delight and Meditation. We read of some, who for casting off the *Love of the Truth*, were given up to *believe a Lie*; and therefore to be preserv'd from Delusions, we must receive not only the Light of the Truth into our Understanding, but the Love of it into our Heart, that it may have a due influence upon our Lives and Conversation.

DISCOURSE II.

Mark 9. 24. latter part. *Lord, I believe, help my Unbelief.*

HAVING in the foregoing Discourse premis'd something touching the Authority and Antiquity of the Apostles Creed, and shew'd the Form of sound Words mention'd in the New Testament to be sum'd up and contain'd in it;

I proceed now to a particular Explication of it, where the first word, *I believe*, gives the Denomination to the whole; and refers not only to that Article to which it is immediately adjoin'd, but must be suppos'd to run thro the whole Body of the Creed, and is to be apply'd to every Article, and to every particular Verity contain'd in it: Wherefore this Word being as it were the Form of the Creed, that diffuses and extends it self to every part of it, 'twill be requisite in the beginning to settle us in the true Notion and Importance of it; which I shall endeavour to do from these words, *I believe, help my Unbelief.* Where I must enquire,

First, Into the Nature and Notion of *Believing*.

Secondly, What kind of believing is here understood.

Thirdly, What is meant by this particular and personal Application of it, in saying, *I believe.* And,

Lastly, The great Reason we have to pray for the supply of the Defects and Imperfection of our Faith, in those words, *Lord, help my Unbelief.* For the

First,

First, The Nature and Notion of Belief in general, it may be thus defin'd: 'Tis an Act or Habit of the Understanding, whereby it assents to, acknowledges or embraces a thing as true, upon the Testimony or Report of another. By the former Clause of the Definition, it agrees with Experience, Science and Opinion, which are all Acts of the Understanding, and imply some Assent to things as true: But by the latter Clause, *viz.* upon the Testimony and Report of another, 'tis distinguish'd and differs from them all. For an Assent to a thing which we see, or is evident to any of our Senses, is called Experience, as that Snow is white, that Ice is cold, and Fire is hot, and the like; which being seen and felt to be so, are not properly said to be believ'd, but experienc'd. Again,

An Assent to a thing as true, which we receive not from any of our Senses, but gather it from the Deductions of Reason, or Connexion of Causes, is not stil'd Experience, but Knowledge: And here if a thing appear evident to the Understanding, by certain and demonstrative Arguments, as that the Whole is greater than a Part, and the like, the Assent to it is not properly Faith, but Science; but if the Arguments brought to prove a thing be only probable, and not necessarily conclusive, the Assent is term'd not Science, but Opinion.

But an Assent to a thing, that is neither evident to our Senses, nor to be gather'd from any natural or necessary connexion of Causes and Effects, and yet is receiv'd as true upon the Testimony and Report of another, is properly call'd Faith or Believing.

Now Faith being an Assent upon Testimony, according to the difference of the Testimony, there may result different kinds of Faith. That which relies upon the Testimony and Authority of Men, is term'd a Human Faith, and is that upon which we proceed in all the Affairs and Transactions of this Life; all which depend upon the Credit we give to the Words and Actions of one another: But a Faith grounded upon the Testimony of God, is call'd a Divine Faith, and is that by which we govern our selves in matters of Religion, and the great Concerns of another World. The former depending upon the Testimony of Men, liable to Error and many Infirmities, is fallible, and may and does deceive us: for some for want of Knowledge relate things otherwise than they are; others, for want of Integrity and Fidelity,
report

report things otherwise than they know them to be; both which ways many are deceiv'd in Human Testimonies. The latter depending upon the Veracity of God, who is Truth it self, must be infallible, and a safe Bottom to rely upon; for *God is not a Man, saith Balak, that he should lie*, Numb. 23. 19. And if we receive the Witness of Man (saith the Apostle) the Witness of God is greater, 1 John 5. 9. For God hath all Knowledge, and so cannot be deceiv'd himself; he hath all Justice and Goodness, and so cannot deceive others.

Now the Word or Witness of God, upon which this Divine Faith is founded, hath been deliver'd to Mankind two ways, either immediately by himself, or mediately by others. By the former he spake to *Abraham, Moses*, and the Prophets, in old Time: by the latter he speaks to us in these last Days. The Prophets under the Old Testament, and the Apostles under the New, receiv'd the Word of God immediately from his own Mouth, or which is all one, from his Holy Spirit; for they both perceiv'd and knew by the Revelation made to them, that 'twas God that spake to them, and accordingly assented to and believ'd it as such; and this was the Foundation of their Faith. They to whom the Prophets and Apostles spake, receiv'd the same Truths, and believ'd them too upon the same Divine Testimony, tho they were not deliver'd immediately to them, as they were to the other; but mediately by those Prophets and Apostles, being well assur'd that what they spake was immediately reveal'd to them by God: and this was the Foundation of their Faith. Hence we read of the Jews, that they *believed the Lord, and his Servant Moses*, Exod. 14. 31. And the Disciples in the New Testament are commended for receiving the Words of the Apostles, not *as the Word of Man*, but *as in truth it was the Word of God*, 1 Thess. 2. 13. For which reason their Faith is said to be built, not only on the Testimony of God, but *upon the Foundation of the Prophets and Apostles*: the Truth of what they deliver'd being confirm'd by those undoubted Miracles and mighty Works, that could be done by none but God that sent them.

Moreover, the Prophets and Apostles being both mortal, and so unable to speak to all succeeding Ages by word of Mouth those Truths, which they were all concern'd to know and believe; therefore they were commanded and assisted by God's Holy Spirit, to commit those things to writing which they had receiv'd immediately from God, and deliver'd to others from him: and these
are

are the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, wherein the Word of God, the Object of our Faith, is contain'd and convey'd down to us, tho not by the Mouths, yet by the Writings of those that receiv'd it from him, in which they were assisted by that same Divine Spirit by which they spake. Hence the believing *Moses's* Writings, is stil'd *Believing in the Lord and his Servant Moses*: And believing the Holy Scripture, is call'd *Believing the Word which Jesus had said*, John 2. 22.

Thus we see the nature of Believing in general, which is the assenting to the Truth of a thing upon the Report of another; as likewise the nature of that Divine Faith with which we believe the Articles of our Creed, which is the assenting to the Truth of each Article from the Testimony of God deliver'd to us in the Writings of the Apostles and Prophets.

But is the bare assenting to Divine Truths upon the Testimony of God, sufficient to create a Divine Faith? The Answer to this will lead me to the

Second thing propounded, namely, What kind of Assent is necessary to the right believing of our Creed. To resolve which; we must observe a double Assent or Belief of a thing, the one Speculative, and the other Practical.

A Speculative Belief or Assent, is the bare owning or acknowledging the Truth of any thing affirm'd in God's Word, as that God is, and that he is the maker and preserver of the World, and the like.

A Practical Belief is such an Assent as influences our Lives, and makes us act according to our Belief; as when the Belief of a God makes us love, honour, and worship him accordingly. The former rests in the Head, and consists only in an idle empty Notion of things: The latter sinks deeper, and reaches the Heart, which is thereby mov'd to Practices suitable to and becoming our Belief. And indeed we never rightly believe any Divine Truth, till it operate so far upon our Mind, as to engage us to live and act according to it. This is the Faith by which we believe our Creed, to wit; not an idle, dead, ineffectual Faith, that is destitute of good Works; but such an active lively Faith, that works by Love, and exerts it self in the Fruits of Righteousness and true Holiness.

And therefore when we profess to believe the Articles of our Christian Faith, we must not content our selves with a barren Notion or Speculation of them, that only floats in the Brain, or serves merely to move the Tongue to talk of them; but we must have such a practical Belief of them, as influences the Will and Affections, and puts us upon the Practice of those Duties that naturally flow from them: *The Word is nigh thee* (saith God) *not only in thy Mouth to talk of it, but in thy Heart that thou mayst do it,* Deut. 30. 14. The Heart is the Principle of Life and Motion, and the Belief of the Heart is the principal of all Christian Virtues, especially those that result from the Nature of the thing believ'd. In a word,

To believe, as it stands in the front of the Creed, is not barely to assent to the Truth of the sundry Articles of it, but to yield such a practical Assent to them, as will lead to Actions futable to such a Belief.

Thus having shew'd the full sense and meaning of the word *Believing*, I proceed,

Thirdly, to that particular and personal Declaration that every one is to make of it, in saying, *I believe*. Faith is an internal immanent Act, known to no Man but he that believeth; for *who knoweth the things of a Man, save the Spirit of a Man which is in him?* And therefore to preserve the Unity of Faith, and qualify us for the visible Communion of the Church, we are requir'd to make an external Acknowledgment and Profession of it: *With the Heart Man believeth unto Righteousness* (saith the Apostle) *and with the Mouth Confession is made unto Salvation*, Rom. 10. 10. where not only the Belief of the Heart, but the Confession of the Mouth is made necessary to Salvation. And elsewhere, *If thou shalt confess with thy Mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thy Heart that God hath raised him from the Dead, thou shalt be saved.* Philip would not receive the Eunuch into the Church, till he had made an open Confession of his Faith, *Acts* 8. 36, 37. And all Adult Persons are still required to do the same.

Now because every one is to be saved by his own Faith, and not another's; therefore the Apostles in composing, and the Church in rehearsing the Creed, have order'd every one to make a particular Recital of his own Faith, willing every one to say in his own Person, *I believe*. The Minister beginning it in the singular Number, makes a rehearsal of his own Faith; and the People saying it
after

after and with him in their own Name, make a particular and personal Declaration of theirs; and by both we see the Harmony and Agreement of the whole Church in the same Faith. 'Tis not sufficient then to believe with the Heart, but we must add to it the Confession of the Mouth, and make an open and solemn profession of our Faith with the Tongue: This God hath not only requir'd, but esteems himself glorify'd by it; *Whoso offereth me praise* (saith he) *he honoureth me*, Psal. 50. ult. And when we unanimously publish and declare our Faith in him, by reciting our Creed together, we do (as the Apostle exhorts) with one Heart and one Mouth, glorify our great Creator. Again, by this solemn Confession of our Faith together, we confirm one another in it, and build up each other in our most Holy Faith; for as one Coal kindles another, so is one Man's Faith quicken'd and enliven'd by the Profession of another's.

Beside, the frequent and solemn Profession of it adds an Honour and Grace to the Christian Faith; it shews that we dare to own it at all times, and likewise delight in the hearing and rehearsing of it, which will recommend us to the *Author and Finisher of our Faith*, and bring us to the end of it, *even the Salvation of our Souls*: for Christ himself declares, That *whosoever shall confess him before Men, him will he confess before his Father which is in Heaven*, Mat. 10. 32. Whereas by concealing, or not confessing the Truths contain'd in our Creed, we cast a Blemish and Reflection upon them, as if we were asham'd to own, or car'd not to hear of them: And we know who hath told us, That *whosoever shall be asham'd of him and his Words, of him shall the Son of Man be asham'd when he shall come in his own Glory, and in his Father's, and that of the Holy Angels*, Luke 9. 26. To prevent which, our Church wills us to be so far from being afraid or asham'd of our Creed, that it requires us not only to stand to it, but daily to repeat it, to be ever ready to own and defend it, and to make not only a general, but a particular declaration of our Faith in it, every single Christian being directed to say in his own Person, *I believe*. And indeed what our Saviour told him whose Son was troubled with a dumb Spirit, *If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth*; may encourage every one of us to say with him, *Lord, I believe, help thou my Unbelief*. And this will lead me to the

Last thing to be consider'd in these words, namely the Reason we have not only to declare our Faith, but to pray for a Supply of the Defects and Imperfections of it: *Help thou my Unbelief.* For the best of us may be too justly stil'd *Men of little Faith*: We are beset with many Temptations that are too apt to weaken it; we have many Avocations, that make us sometimes neglect or forget it; there are many Seducers gon abroad in the World, that labour to corrupt the Faith, some by adding to it, and imposing new Articles of Faith; others by taking from it, and lopping off some of its main Branches: and both join in undermining the Creed, and lessening our Belief of it. There are many Allurements in the World, that are apt to draw us from the Faith; besides which there are many Difficulties and Discouragements that may scare and affright us from it; in short, there are numberless Opportunities and Occasions of shaking our Faith, and drawing us into Infidelity: And therefore we have great need to pray, that *our Faith fail not*, and to say, *Lord help our Unbelief.*

And to make these Prayers effectual, let us (as we are commanded) daily repeat our Creed, to preserve the Remembrance of it. Let us frequently study and meditate upon it, to preserve the Purity and Integrity of it: And

Lastly, Let us always abound in those Acts of Holiness and Vertue, that flow and may be learnt from it: So shall we shortly see what at present we can only believe, and our Faith shall be crown'd and swallow'd up in Fruition.

DISCOURSE III.

Heb. 11. 6. the middle part. *He that cometh unto God must believe that he is, &c.*

HAVING explain'd the Act of Believing in the beginning of the Creed, which is to be apply'd to all the following Articles; I am to proceed to the Object of this Faith, and to explain the necessary points of it, that are to be thus believ'd by us. And here the

First

First Article relates to the Being or Existence of God, contain'd in those words, *I believe in God*; which being the Foundation of all the rest, and indeed the Ground-work of all Religion, must be well laid, in order to our being built up in this Holy Faith: And this I shall endeavour to do from these words, *He that cometh unto God, must believe that he is.* Where,

By *coming unto God*, we are to understand our Reception into his Church, and Admission to all the Privileges of his House and Family.

By *believing that he is*, is meant the acknowledging the Existence of such an infinite supreme Being, into whose Family we are thus admitted. So that the sense of this first Article lies in an Assent to the Being and Existence of a Deity, which being imply'd in all that follow, is a proper Beginning of this Confession of our Faith. And here omitting all Criticisms upon the Phrase of *believing in*, which is sufficiently explain'd in our Text, by *believing that he is*; I must for the Explication of this fundamental Article enquire,

First, Into the Notion of God, or what is to be understood by it.

Secondly, Into the Grounds and Reasons, upon which the Belief of such a Being is found.

Thirdly, Being express'd here in the singular Number, *I believe in God*; I must add something touching the Unity of the Godhead. And

Lastly, Conclude with the Duties that result from such a Belief.

For the *First*, Tho we cannot give a perfect Definition of God, it being impossible for our finite Understanding to grasp or comprehend Infinity; yet we can frame such a Notion of him, as may satisfy us of his Being, and be sufficient to all the ends and purposes of Religion: And this Notion is, That he is a Being infinitely perfect, without the least Defect or Imperfection; that he is a Being of himself, independent upon any other, upon whom all things else depend, which were all made and are still govern'd by him. But the better to conceive of him, we are,

1. To imagine a Being, wherein the Perfections of all, even the noblest Creatures, are in the highest Degree concenter'd and united.

2. We are in our Thoughts to remove from him all manner of Defect or Imperfection, that may be found in any even the best of them.

3. We are to conceive a First Cause, that by an infinite Power, Wisdom and Goodness, first made, and still preserves and governs all things both in Heaven and Earth: And upon the whole will result the Notion of a Being eminently and absolutely perfect, independent and subsisting of himself; a spiritual Being, discerning, understanding and knowing all things; All-powerful, and able to do what he pleases; All-seeing, and acquainted with all the Thoughts, Words and Actions of his Creatures; an inexhaustible Fountain of Love and Goodness, that provides for the whole World, and orders all things according to the Counsel of his own Will; taking a more particular Care of Mankind, wisely and graciously disposing all things for their Welfare and Happiness both now and for ever. This is the highest and best Conception that our finite and scanty Understanding can frame of such an infinite and incomprehensible Being. From whence I must go on,

Secondly, To consider the Grounds and Reasons, upon which the Belief of such an infinite transcendent Being is founded. And they are chiefly these five:

1. The admirable Frame, Order, and Government of the World.
 2. The Universal Consent of Mankind.
 3. All supernatural and miraculous Occurrences.
 4. Infallible Predictions of future contingent Events.
- Lastly, The Testimony and Acts of Conscience.

1. We may justly believe that God is, from the Make, Order and Government of the World, and all things in it: *The invisible things of God (saith the Apostle) from the Creation of the World, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made; even his eternal Power and Godhead, Rom, 1. 20.* Whoever casts an Eye on a well-built House, will presently conclude that an Artificer hath been there; he cannot be so sottish, as to imagine that the Stones and other Materials came there of themselves, and rose up by chance into so fair and beautiful a Structure: And can it be conceiv'd, that so noble and glorious a Fabrick as this of the World, should be rais'd and preserv'd without an All-wise and All-powerful Architect? No, as *Every House* (saith the

the Apostle) *is built by some Man, so he that built all things is God,* Heb. 3. 4.

We see many things receive a Being, that once had none. Now this must necessarily lead us to a first Cause that had no beginning, and gave a Being to all things else: for every thing we see is of another, and hath some Cause of its Being; and nothing can give a Being to it self. For since the Cause must be always before the Effect, if any could give a Being to it self, it must have been before it was; yea, it must be and not be at the same time, which are flat Contradictions: and therefore if there be any thing that had a Beginning, there must be something that had none, because nothing can give Beginning to it self.

But beside that the Dependence of all inferiour Beings does necessarily lead to one that is independent, upon whom they all depend: I say beside this, The admirable Order and Beauty of the Universe; the wonderful Usefulness and Subserviency of all the Creatures in it to one another; the ample Provision and Care that is taken of them, especially of Mankind; the curious Structure and Needlework of our Bodies, the wonderful Frame and Operations of the Soul; in a word, the wise disposing of all things, and directing them to their particular Ends, lead us to the Knowledg of God, and may abundantly satisfy us in the Belief of his Being.

2. The Universal Consent of Mankind in this Belief, may farther confirm us in the Truth of it; for there is no Age, Place, or People, where this Belief has not generally obtain'd: the most barbarous Nations that have little or no Knowledg of any thing else, have yet retain'd the Knowledg and Worship of a God; and tho they have been without Commerce or Correspondence with other Parts, yet they have not been without some Religion or other.

Now whence should this proceed, but from a common and natural Principle, inclining all men to worship a God and bear witness to his Being? Which is another Ground for our Belief of him.

3. The extraordinary and miraculous Occurrences that have happen'd in the World, are a farther proof of the Being of a God, and may establish us in the Belief of him: for such miraculous Actions cannot be perform'd, but by Almighty Power. The Works of Nature are uniform and regular, and there is a certain Sphere of Activity, wherein all natural Agents are limited.

ted and confin'd: so that when any thing comes to pass, which is out of the reach of their Power, as raising the dead to life again, giving sight to those that are born blind, curing all Diseases with a Word's speaking, without the use of any means, and the like; these things being above the Power of any Natural and Second Causes, are wholly to be ascrib'd to the First, and are a plain Demonstration of a Deity, whose Power is unlimited, and can do whatever pleases him. Thus Miracles prove their Author to be Divine, and all supernatural Acts of Omnipotence demonstrate a supreme transcendent Being, that overrules all his Creatures, and disposes all their Operations: which is a farther Proof of this Article, and may confirm us in the Belief that God is.

4. The predicting future Events, or fore-telling things to come, argues such an All-wise and Omniscient Being, as is call'd God, and may further convince us, *that he is.*

By future Events here, we understand not such as come to pass in the ordinary and common course of Providence, or depend upon any natural and necessary Causes; as the rising of the Sun and Moon, the Motion of the Planets, or the Eclipses that happen to those heavenly Bodies, and the like: for these being under a constant Law, he that knows their Courses may easily foresee and foretel them. But by future Events we mean such casual and contingent Effects, as depend upon Causes not yet in being, or upon the arbitrary Will and Power of voluntary Agents: As what will be the fate of Families and Kingdom in future Ages; what will betide the Church, or fall out in all parts of the World. These things being the Effects of remote, occult and uncertain Causes, can be foreseen only by such an infinite and unlimited Understanding as knoweth all things.

Again, By foretelling things to come, we mean not any probable Guesses or Conjectures about them, where things may happen to be as some presag'd them; but such a certain and infallible fore-knowledg of casual and fortuitous Events, as never did or can err in the Prediction: And this being above the reach of any created Understanding, must be ascrib'd only to an infinite Mind; for all human Knowledg is limited and finite; and there is a certain Sphere of Science, beyond which it cannot go. Tho some may have a farther Reach and deeper Insight into things than others, yet still there are Bounds set to them, and the wisest Men do *know but in part*: Our Knowledg is confin'd

fin'd to things past and present; and none but he who made and orders all things, that rules and directs the Operations of Mankind, and upon whose Will all their Actions depend, can possibly know and foretel things to come. And therefore we find God Almighty thus upbraiding the Folly of Idols, and the Heathen Gods; *Let them shew us things to come*: this is peculiar to him that governs the World, and gives all Creatures in it a Power to work as he pleases. So that all the Prophecies extant in Holy Scriptures, where things were foretold many hundred Years before they came to pass, and yet the Event still answer'd the Prediction; All those Prophecies, I say, are a clear Proof of a Deity, who sees and knows all things, and may farther confirm us in the Belief that God is.

Lastly, The Testimony and Acts of Conscience, are another Proof and Demonstration of a Deity. If we consult our own Breasts, we shall find there both a Witness and Remembrancer of a God, our own Consciences accusing or excusing us, according as our Actions please or displease him: we feel a certain Pleasure and Peace in our Minds upon the doing of good and vertuous Actions, and we are haunted with Fears and Terrors when we have done any Evil. Now these can be no other than the secret Notices and Alarms, which Conscience, as God's Deputy, gives us of him; for if there were no supreme Being to reward or punish, and consequently to be lov'd or fear'd by us, there could be no Reason or Account given of these things.

Thus I have shew'd, as well as the Greatness of the Object, and the Slenderiness of our Faculties will admit, what God is, and likewise what good Ground there is to believe the Existence of such a Being. But

Because this Object of our Faith is express'd in the singular Number, *I believe in God*, we are here,

Thirdly, To consider the Unity of the Godhead, which is more fully express'd in the Nicene Creed, *I believe in one God*: Tho in a large sense there be *Gods many and Lords many*, yet to us *there is but one God and one Lord*. The Heathens indeed had a multiplicity of Gods, according to the Variety of Blessings they suppos'd to receive from them; but the wisest of them worship'd only one supreme Numen with the highest Acts of Adoration: and Christians are frequently taught to believe in *one God*, and *that there is none beside him*. Indeed the Unity of the Godhead

is

is necessarily included in his Existence, and a plurality of Gods is utterly inconsistent with the Nature and Notion of a Deity; for the Notion of a God supposes him to be the first Original Cause of all Things, or an independent Being, upon which all Things else depend: Now 'tis utterly impossible there should be two first Causes; and that there should be more independent Beings, upon which all Things depend, is a manifest Contradiction.

Besides, if there be one God that hath all Perfections, there cannot be more; for if there could, either those Perfections would be divided and so become less, or both would have all, or there might be more than all: all which are gross and irreconcilable Absurdities.

Moreover, the Government of the World cannot admit of a plurality of Gods; for two rival Deities might have different Counsels and Resolutions, which would destroy Order, and introduce Confusion: they might give different Commands, and then since no Man can serve two Masters, Mankind would be unavoidably distracted in their Duty and Obedience. In a word, if (as one hath well observ'd) it be better that the Universe be govern'd by one than many, we may be assur'd that 'tis so, because nothing must be conceiv'd of God but what is best. So that 'tis as necessary to believe the Unity as the Existence of a Deity, it being no less absurd to affirm that there are many Gods, than 'tis that there is none.

Thus we see upon how good Grounds we believe both the Being and the Unity of the Godhead; it remains that we learn and practise the Duties that naturally flow from both. As,

1. If there be such a supreme Being that hath all Perfections in the most eminent Degree, let us learn to act and demean ourselves towards him accordingly. That is,

If he hath all Goodness, let us love him with the most superlative Affection; if he hath all Power, let us put our whole Trust and Affiance in him; if he be all Justice, let us have an awful Fear and Dread of him always before our Eyes: In short, being an Object so transcendently great and excellent, let us account him worthy of the highest Acts of Worship and Adoration, always honouring his Greatness, and making frequent Acknowledgment of his unspeakable Goodness. And since we all depend upon him, let us daily pray to him for what we want, and as often praise him for all that we receive.

2. From

2. From the Unity of the Godhead, we are taught to worship one God, and no more, and to confine Religious Worship only to Him. The Heathens worship'd many Gods, and by that means paid their Adorations to those that were no Gods; but to us there is but one God, and therefore we are to worship none beside him. The first Commandment forbids us to have any other Gods but him. And our blessed Saviour hath laid on us that strict Precept, *Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve*, Mat. 4. 10. *Hear O Israel (saith Moses to the Israelites) the Lord our God is one Lord*, and therefore he wills them to love him with all their Heart, and with all their Mind, and with all their Strength, Deut. 6. 4, 5. Where from the Unity of his Nature he presses them to an entire and undivided Affection, making him the sole Object of their Love, Fear and Adoration: This his singular and transcendent Excellency may challenge from us, and is no more than what is included in this first Article, when we say, *I believe in God*.

DISCOURSE IV.

I Cor. 8. 6. *To us there is one God, the Father.*

IN the first Article of the Creed, I have discours'd of the Being and Unity of God, and shew'd what firm Grounds and Reasons we have for the Belief of Both.

The next thing to be consider'd in it, is the relation he bears to all others, which both the Catechism and Text tell us is that of a Father, *I believe in God the Father*. Where I must enquire,

First, In what sense we here believe God to be the Father.
Secondly, Why this is made a part of the Creed. And,
Thirdly, What we learn from the Belief of it. For the

First, The relative Term of *Father* is properly founded on Generation, and is generally applied to whatever produces another, or is any ways the Author or Cause of its Being; hence because all things are of God, he is frequently stil'd, *The God and Father of all, who is above all, and in all, and through all*, Eph. 4. 6. So that God may be term'd a Father,

1. Upon the account of Creation, because he made all Things, and still preserves them in being; *He giveth us Life and Breath, and all Things*, saith the Apostle; and *in him we live, move and have our Being*. *It is he that hath made us* (saith the Psalmist) *and not we our selves*, Psal. 100. 3. But the Consideration of this will fall more properly under the next Branch of this Article, wherein we believe God to be the *Maker of Heaven and Earth*, which is call'd *the Generation of them*, Gen. 2. 4. In this sense all the Creatures in the World, but especially all Men, may call God Father; which made the Prophet ask the Question, *Have we not all one Father? hath not one God created us?* Mal. 2. 10.

2. God may be term'd a Father upon the account of Redemption, which being a restoring us from a Condition worse than nothing to a state of Happiness, may be reckon'd a sort of Generation; and he that effects this for us, may be very well term'd a Father: *Is not he thy Father that bought thee?* saith *Moses* to the *Israelites*, who were rescu'd from the Bondage of *Egypt*, and entering upon the promis'd Land of *Canaan*, Deut. 32. 6. To which we find that People returning this Answer, *Doubtless thou art our Father, tho Abraham be ignorant of us; thou O Lord art our Father, our Redeemer, thy Name is from Everlasting*, Isa. 63. 16.

3. God may be term'd a Father upon the account of Regeneration; for if our first Birth gives him the Title of Father, to be born again must give a new Addition to it: Our Saviour told *Nicodemus*, that *he must be born again*, not indeed of *Flesh*, but of *Water and the Holy Ghost*, John 3. 7. And from this spiritual Birth, God is stil'd a Spiritual Father: *Of his own Will begat he us* (saith the Apostle) *by the Word of Truth, that we should be a kind of first-Fruits of his Creatures*, James 1. 18. This is call'd sometime a *raising us from the Dead*, sometimes a *new Creation*, sometimes a *being born of God*, and a *being begotten again of incorruptible Seed*; all which being effected by God for us, give him the new Relation of Father.

4. God may be term'd a Father upon account of Adoption, *having predestinated us unto the Adoption of Children by Jesus Christ to himself*, Eph. 1. 5. Adoption is the taking a Child from another House and Family, and ingrafting him into our own; and he that thus adopts him is stil'd a Father, and the Party so adopted is call'd a Son: thus *Pharaoh's Daughter* adopted *Moses*, and cherish'd him as her Son, not by Nature, but by Grace and Favour. And as they that are thus adopted, are intitled to all the

Privileges of Sons, even to the Right of Inheritance; so he that thus adopts, hath all the Right and Power of a Father. Now God having thus adopted us, and from Aliens, Strangers and Enemies, taken us into his own House and Family, we are to him as Sons, and He is to us a Father; which made the Apostle say, *We have not receiv'd the Spirit of Bondage again to fear, but we have receiv'd the Spirit of Adoption, whereby we cry Abba Father,* Rom. 8. 15.

5. God is term'd a Father, by regenerating us not only to a Life of Grace here, but of Glory hereafter; for so the Apostle declares, that *he hath begotten us again to a lively Hope, by the Resurrection of Christ from the dead, to an Inheritance immortal, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserv'd in Heaven for us,* 1 Pet. 1. 3, 4. The Resurrection from the Dead is that *Regeneration* of which our Saviour speaks, when *the Son of Man shall sit on the Throne of his Glory,* Mat. 19. 28. And our partaking of it, is a Nativity or entrance upon another Life; and as we are stil'd the Sons of God by his raising us from the dead, so does he thereby justly acquire the Title and Relation of Father.

But tho God be in all the foremention'd senses frequently and truly stil'd a Father, yet there remains another and higher sense of it, which is mainly if not only intended in this Article. And that is,

By Natural and Eternal Generation, in which sense he is frequently in Scripture call'd the *Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*, and of him only: for beside the common relation he bears to all Men, as God and Father of all, there is a more peculiar relation of Paternity belonging to him, as Father of our Lord Jesus Christ; and as Christ is said to be his only Son, and his only begotten Son, so by virtue thereof God must be a Father in a way peculiar to him only, namely by

An Eternal and Ineffable Generation: Now Generation (you know) is the Production of the like, or the begetting another of the same Nature and Substance with it self. And if Man by begetting a Son in his own likeness, that is of the same human Nature, does thereby obtain the name of Father; how much more may God, in begetting a Son in his own Image, and of the same Divine Nature and Essence with himself, receive the same Appellation? Moreover,

As this way of begetting a Son from all Eternity, that is, every way alike and the same with himself, is peculiar to God,

with respect to this only Son; so this high and eminent relation of a Father in this sense, can agree only to the one, with respect to the other.

That this is the principal sense of *Father* in this first Article, not only the concurrent Exposition of antient Writers, who generally expound it this way, but many other Considerations may evince; As

1. The Creed being a Confession of our Faith in the Holy Trinity, as may easily appear by the parts of it, this first Article declares our Faith in God, as he is the first Person in this Sacred Trinity; and being distinguish'd here by the Name and Title of Father, it must be understood in a sense that is peculiar to him only. Now the general relation of Father, as taken from Creation, Redemption, Regeneration and the like, is common to all the three Persons; and therefore to distinguish the first Person from the rest, we must understand it of a Father by eternal Generation, by which he is a Father only to our Lord Jesus Christ. Again,

2. 'Tis generally suppos'd, that Christ's Commission to the Apostles to *Teach and Baptize all Nations in the Name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost*, gave them the Measures in composing the Creed, and by this Sacred Form of Baptism they drew up the Rule of Faith; which requiring a Belief in the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, as three distinct Persons, the Name of Father must be taken in a sense not applicable to the other two, which is only that ineffable Generation before mention'd. In short,

The Title of Father is to be taken in the same sense in this Article, as it is in the form of Baptism. Now 'tis evident in that Form, the notion of Father hath no relation to any but the Son, to which it is join'd: And as we are baptiz'd into no other Son than the only begotten of the Father, so neither do we here believe in any other Father than the Father of that only begotten Son; and therefore a Reverend Father hath told us, that the proper explication of these first Words of the Creed, is this, *I believe in God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*, Ephes.

1. 3.

But how is God in a peculiar manner said to be the Father of Jesus Christ? Why the Scripture mentions sundry ways.

As (1.) For the human Nature of Christ, that had no other Father but God, who by his Holy Spirit *overshadowed the Blessed Virgin*, whereby his natural Body was conceived and born of her, *Luke* 1. 35.

(2.)

(2.) God is said to be the Father of Christ in respect of his Mission, or sending him with Authority to be King of *Israel*: This the Psalmist declares in the 2 *Psal.* 6, 7. where he brings in God thus speaking, *Yet have I set my King upon my Holy Hill of Zion*; and in the next verse, *Thou art my Son, this Day have I begotten thee*. Hence we find *Nathaniel* styling him both the *Son of God*, and *King of Israel*, *John* 1. 49. And Christ himself calls God *Father* upon the account of his *sanctifying and sending him into the World*, and blam'd those who thought he *blasphem'd*, for saying, *He was the Son of God*, *John* 10. 36.

(3.) God is stil'd the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, upon the account of his raising him from the Dead, which being the giving of a new Life, gives the denomination of Father. Thus the Apostle declares, that *God hath fulfilled the Promise made to our Fathers, in raising up Jesus from the Dead*; and upon that account applies those words of the Psalmist, *Thou art my Son, this Day have I begotten thee*, *Acts* 13. 33. For which Reason he is said to be the *Son of God with Power, by his raising him from the Dead*.

Lastly, God is said to be the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ in a higher and more eminent manner; namely, by an eternal Communication of the Godhead to him. God the Father had the Divine Nature originally of himself; God the Son hath the same Divine Nature, yet not of himself, but from Eternity, communicated to him by the Father; for which reason he is in the Nicene Creed stil'd, *God of God, Light of Light, Very God of Very God*. Hence it is that Christ so often calls God *Father*: *I and my Father* (saith he) *are one*, in nature Coequal, and Coessential with each other; but with this Difference, the Father is of himself, the Son is of the Father. From this Communication of the Divine Essence, the one hath the Relation and Title of a Father, peculiar to the first Person in the Trinity, the other of a Son, peculiar to the Second; the one Begetting, and the other Begotten: and both in a way above the reach of our Understanding to conceive; and therefore we must rest contented to believe them, upon the Testimony of that divine Authority which hath reveal'd them.

But why is this made a part of the Creed? why, to instruct us in the great Mystery of the Trinity; and to teach us the Order and Relation that the three Persons bear to each other. Where we learn,

1. The Priority of the Father, who, in the Order of the Persons in the Blessed Trinity, is evermore reckon'd the first, even as a Father is still suppos'd to be before the Son.

2. The name of Father implies something of Eminence and Dignity above the Son; which Eminence consists not in any Superiority of Nature, for in that respect the Son *thought it no Robbery to be equal with the Father*: but in respect of his Derivation or receiving the Godhead from him, he declares, *my Father is greater than I*; that is, not with reference to his Essence, but his Generation, whereby he must be suppos'd to receive his Being from his Father, who alone hath it of himself, and is the Original of all Power and Essence in the Son. Hence we find Christ often acknowledging, that he is *from him*, and that he *liveth by him*, generally owning all things as receiv'd of him: *The Son* (saith he) *can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do*, having no Power of himself, but what the Father gave him: and elsewhere, *As the Father hath Life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have Life in himself*, John 5. 26. Both have it (as one observes upon the place) but with this difference, the Father giveth it, and the Son receiveth it.

The Preheminence then of the first Person in the Trinity is to be of none but himself, whereas the Order of the other Persons bespeaks their having their Being from him: and as 'tis contrary to the Nature and Notion of a Son to be of himself, so 'tis a high Derogation from the Honour of the Father, to suppose him to be of any other.

Thus is God the eternal Father of his own eternal Son, who was before all Worlds, by an ineffable Generation, begotten of him: Which being a great Mystery, is to be receiv'd as the Object of our Faith, and not to be scan'd by the narrow measures of our shallow Reason. From whence I proceed,

Lastly, To the Duties that may be infer'd from this Relation. And 1. from that Relation of Father, which God bears to us, we may learn filial Fear, Honour, and Obedience to him: *A Son honoureth his Father*, being both afraid and unwilling to offend him; *if I then be a Father, where is my Honour? if a Master, where is my Fear?* saith the Lord of Hosts, Mal. 1. 6. Moreover, this Relation challenges our Love, Reverence, and Obedience; *Children obey your Parents* (saith the Apostle) *as 'tis meet in the Lord*. And elsewhere, *We have had Fathers in the Flesh, and we did them reverence*. These are Natural Duties, which every one must own,

yea

Second Part of the Church-Catechism.

159

yea they are Debts, which the common Reason of Mankind teaches them to pay; and if this be to be done to earthly Parents, how much more to our Father who is Heaven?

2. This Relation teaches us to imitate God, and to become as like him as we may. Children we know not only resemble their Parents in their Features and Complexion, but commonly imitate them in their Behaviour and Actions; *Be Followers of God* (saith the Apostle) *as dear Children*, Eph. 4. 1. Let us set him before us as our Pattern, and frame our Lives both by his Precepts and Example: this Lesson the Holy Scripture frequently inculcates upon us, willing us to be Holy as he that hath called us is Holy, *to be perfect as our Heavenly Father is perfect, and merciful even as he is merciful.*

3. This Relation teaches us to put our whole Trust and Affiance in God. A Child (you know) is not wont to distrust the Love of his Father, but casts himself upon the Care and tender Affection of his Parents; How much more should we rely on our Heavenly Father, who is never deaf to the Wants and Petitions of his People? For if earthly Parents know how to give good Gifts to their Children, how much more will your Heavenly Father give good things to them that ask them?

4. We learn from hence patiently and thankfully to bear our Heavenly Father's Correction; for he never corrects us, but for our Good; he never chastens any out of Passion, or for his Pleasure, but merely for their Profit, that they may be Partakers of his Holiness: his Chastisements proceed only from the Love and Bowels of a Father, and *yield the peaceable Fruits of Righteousness to them that are exercis'd therewith.* In short,

If God be our Father, we may learn to demean our selves worthy of, and futable to that Relation. This should inspire us with noble Thoughts, and encourage us to nothing but brave and worthy Undertakings: considering the Dignity of our Descent, we should raise our Minds above all mean and base Projects and Designs, and not do any thing unworthy our near Alliance unto Heaven.

Lastly, If God be the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, let us learn thence to admire and adore the Power of the Divine Majesty, acknowledging the Trinity, and worshipping the Unity: And because we cannot thorowly fathom this Mystery, nor understand how he that was from Eternity should be begotten, let us veil our Reason to Faith, and admire and believe what we cannot comprehend.

D I S-

DISCOURSE V.

Rev. i. 8. lat. part. *The Almighty.* The foregoing words are, *I am Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and Ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.*

WE are yet upon the first Article of the Creed, where having explain'd the Act of Believing, contain'd in those first words, *I believe,* together with the Object of it, in those, *I believe in God;* I came to the three Properties attributed to him as the first Person in the ever-blessed Trinity, which being three great Truths assented to in this Article, must be particularly handled. As,

First, The near Relation he bears to Christ, and to all Mankind, contain'd in that word, *The Father;* of which in the last.

Secondly, The boundless Extent and Immenfity of his Power, in the word *Almighty;* of which I am to speak at present.

Thirdly, The Amplitude and Greatness of his Works, in those words, *Maker of Heaven and Earth;* of which hereafter.

At present I am to treat of that great Attribute of God the Father, his Almightyness, from the words read, in which God expressly declares himself to be what we here believe him, *The Almighty.*

In treating of this Attribute, I must

First, Shew the true Sense and Meaning of this word *Almighty.*

Secondly, That it truly and properly belongs to God, and to none else.

Thirdly, What Influence the Belief of it is to have upon our Practice.

For the Sense and Importance of the word *Almighty,* it implies these two things: (1.) an Infiniteness of Power; and (2.) an Absoluteness of Rule and Dominion.

1. I say, it signifies an Infiniteness or Immenfity of Power; and to be Almighty, is to have all Might and Power in and from ones self, and by virtue thereof to be able to do all things: 'tis to have no Bounds or Limits set to the Power of the Agent, to have

no determinate Sphere of Action, but to be boundless and infinite in Operation, and able to do whatsoever pleaseth him: this cannot be affirm'd of any created Beings, who are all limited both in their Essence and Operations; they have a certain Sphere of Activity, wherein they are confin'd, and beyond which they cannot act. Thus Man and all other Creatures have a Power of doing some things which reach to those within their Sphere, and without it all things are impossible to them: whereas an Almighty Being hath no Bounds or Limits to its Activity, but can do whatever pleases him both in Heaven and Earth; and he to whom all things are possible, and nothing impossible, is truly and properly Omnipotent, which is the first sense of this *Almightiness*.

2. It implies farther an Absoluteness of Rule and Dominion over all things, and this is founded on a Power of making them, which gives a right of governing and disposing all things by an absolute Freedom of Will: for none can have an unlimited Sovereignty and Authority over all, but he that made them; and consequently, he that is able to command and govern all Persons and all things as seemeth him good; he that hath a supreme, uncontrollable, and independent Authority over all, without receiving his Power from another, or being accountable for the Use, Exercise, or Regulation of it, he is truly Almighty.

Thus having briefly shew'd what is imply'd in the word *Almighty*, namely, a Power that reaches to the making, governing, and disposing of all things, I proceed

Secondly, To shew that this truly and properly belongs to God, and none else; this Attribute we daily ascribe to him in our Prayers, and by this Attribute the Holy Scripture hath frequently taught us to set forth his Praise. Now the Omnipotence of God may appear several ways.

1. Because the Force and Activity of his Power reaches to all things, neither is there any thing possible which he cannot do; *I know* (saith Job) *that thou canst do everything*, Job 42. 1, 8. This is confirm'd to us by the Testimony of an Angel, who told the Blessed Virgin, that *with God nothing is impossible*, Luk. 1. 34. yea, we have the word of Christ for it, who tells us, that *with God all things are possible*, Mark 10. 27. He is not tied up or limited in his Operations, but his Power extends to all things: to stop the Sun in his Course, or make it go back; to divide the Sea, and make the Waters stand on a heap; to draw Water out of a Rock,

to keep the Fire from burning, with other miraculous Acts that are out of the Power of any created Beings, are all possible, and have been effected by him. Again,

2. He is able not only to do all things, but he can do them with the greatest ease, there is nothing difficult to Omnipotence; he can perform the greatest things with the least Exertion of his Power, restoring sight to the Blind, yea raising the Dead to Life again, with a Look, a Touch or a Word: *If he say the Word, the most diseas'd Patient shall be whole; he doth but look on the Earth, and it trembleth; and if he touch the Hills, they will smoke,* Psal. 18. 18. Yea he made the whole World with a Word, and by the same Word can unmake and annihilate it: and sure nothing can be difficult or impossible to him who so easily made, and can so easily destroy all things. *Is any thing too hard for the Lord?* said God to Abraham, Gen. 18. 14. No, for *thou hast made the Heaven and the Earth by thy great Power, and thy outstretched Arm, and there is nothing too hard for thee,* Jer. 32. 17, 27.

3. God hath all this Power in and from himself and no other; his Power is not deriv'd but inherent, and his Ability of doing all things is essential to his Being: 'tis a Weakness to depend on, or receive the Power of acting from another, which is therefore to be remov'd in our Conceptions of God, who is the first Cause of all things, and hath all Power in himself; he is not, he cannot be beholden to another for it, nor is he accountable for its Use or Exercise. Of his own Will he first made the World, and by his own Power he still continues to uphold it; from the infinite Fullness and Plenitude whereof he is truly stil'd, *The Almighty*.

4. Another Proof of God's Omnipotence is, that all the Power that is in the Creatures is deriv'd from him; he is the Fountain of all Might, and so may be justly term'd Almighty; there is no kind of Ability in any Creature, no Activity in any Cause, but what proceeds from him as the first Cause of all: *In him we live, move, and have our Being, and without him we can do nothing.* He is not only the Cause of all Being, but the Center of all Power; and as every thing in the World derives its Essence, so does it receive its Operation from him.

5. God may be farther stil'd Omnipotent, because there is no Resistance to be made to his Power: *In thy hand* (said King Jehoshaphat) *there is Power and Might, so that none is able to withstand thee,* 2 Chron. 20. 6. And King Nebuchadnezzar having felt his Power, confesseth thus to him, *He does according to his Will*

Will in the Army of Heaven, and among the Inhabitants of the Earth; none can stay his hand, or say unto him, what dost thou? Dan. 4. 35. there can be no successful Resistance, but where one comes with greater Force than he that goes against him. Now since all Power is from God, there can be nothing but Weakness and Impotence against him, and these to be sure can make but a feeble and slender Resistance: hence it comes to pass, that God can with equal Facility do the greatest things as the least; out of the same Clay he can as easily make a Vessel of Honour as Dishonour, and like the Potter is able to dash them in pieces when he pleases; for who is able to resist his Will?

Lastly, God is the *Almighty* in respect of the Extent of his Rule and Authority, which is *over all his Works: The Lord hath prepared his Throne in the Heavens* (saith the Psalmist) *and his Kingdom ruleth over all, Psal. 103. 19.* God is the Maker and Preserver, and by virtue thereof the Proprietor of all things: *The Heavens are thine* (saith David) *and the Earth is also thine, and the Fulness thereof; yea, the whole World and all that dwell therein, for he made and fashion'd it, and consequently hath the sole Right of governing and disposing all things in it.* Hence we read, *that God is the King of all the Earth, he reigneth over the Heathen, and his Dominion extendeth to the ends of the World: he is indeed the sole, absolute, original, and independent Governor of the Universe, the Only Potentate, as St. Paul styles him, 1 Tim. 6. 15.* All Authority and Power is deriv'd from him, and subordinate to him; 'tis by his Commission that all earthly *Kings reign, and Princes decree justice*; his Delegates and Vicegerents they are to act for his Honour, and are accountable to him for the Exercise of their Dominion: *for the most High ruleth in the Kingdoms of Men, and giveth them to whomsoever he will, Dan. 4. 25.* In a word,

He that hath all Power in Heaven and Earth, and from whom all that are in both receive it, is truly and properly stil'd Almighty; which being frequently declar'd of God in Holy Scripture, we justly believe him to be so.

But are all things possible to God? does not the Apostle say 'tis impossible for God to lie? Are not some things out of the reach of his Power, as to make one and the same thing to be and not to be, in the same respect, or to be in distant Places at the same time? If they are, how is he said to be able to do all things? In answer to this, when we say that God is Almighty and able to do all things, it must be understood of all things within the reach of his Power, and agree-

able to the Divine Perfections: for some things imply a Repugnancy of being or subsisting; as for a thing to be and not to be at the same time, or to be in two or more distant Places at once, which is to be one and not one. These things implying a Contradiction, are not the Objects of Power, but being in themselves impossible, cannot any way be done; not for want of Power, but from the Incapacity of the thing, which is a Contradiction to all Power, and so not within the reach of it.

Again, some Things have a Repugnancy with the Divine Nature and Perfections, and these are not within the Power of God, because they are inconsistent with the Purity and Perfection of his Nature: thus God cannot lie, or be unjust, or deny himself; for Truth, Justice, and Holiness being Divine Perfections, the contrary to them must be Failings and Imperfections, and so not to be ascrib'd to a Being that is absolutely and infinitely perfect; and this is no Derogation from his Power, but a removing from him all Weakness and Imperfection.

So that all things that are possible are within the Sphere of God's Omnipotence, and nothing is impossible to him which is not impossible to be at all: whatever is so is not within the Object of any Power; and certainly he may have all Power, who hath not that which belongeth to no Power.

Beside, 'tis no diminishing of God's Omnipotence to deny to him what is a Contradiction to his Essence: thus we may say (as one hath observ'd) that he cannot sleep, because his Being is spiritual and ever active; he cannot want, because he is all-sufficient; he cannot die, because he is necessarily and essentially existent; he cannot be ignorant, because he is infinite in Knowledge, and knoweth all things; he cannot sin, because he is essentially holy: the doing of these things implies Impotence and Infirmary, and therefore must be remov'd from so glorious and perfect a Being; and the not doing these things is so far from proving him not to be omnipotent, that, as *St. Austin* tells us, he cannot do them, because he is so. In short,

God is Almighty, because he can do all things that may be done; and that he cannot do an ill thing, shews that all his other Perfections are as essential to him as his Power.

Thus I have explain'd to you the Nature and Notion of God's Omnipotence, from which we may learn the following Lessons.

1. From the Consideration of God's Infinite and Almighty Power, we may learn to live in a constant Fear and Dread of him;

for God is great, mighty, and terrible, and therefore to be fear'd of all that are round about him. Hence our Saviour warns us whom we should fear, to wit, not Men, who are all but frail, impotent Creatures; but fear God, who is able to destroy both Soul and Body in Hell, Luke 12. 5. This should deter us from all Sin and Wickedness, or doing any thing that may offend him. Solomon's Advice is, *Contend not with any that is mightier than thou.* And what Madness then must it be to contend with the Almighty? *Do we provoke the Lord to Jealousy* (saith the Apostle) *are we stronger than he?*

2. We may learn from hence to live in all humble Duty and Obedience to him; *I am the Almighty* (saith God to Abraham) *walk before me and be thou perfect,* Gen. 17. 1. He is the Sovereign Lord and Governor of the Universe, who hath a full Right to command us, and therefore it must be our Duty to obey; we live under his Government, and are subjected to his Power and Providence, and 'tis happy for us that we are so; which should teach us to live by his Laws, and readily perform his Commands.

3. The Consideration of God's Almighty Power may serve to strengthen our Faith and Hope in him; *he is faithful that hath promis'd,* and able to make it good, and therefore we may safely rely upon him. Abraham stagger'd not thro' unbelief, being fully persuaded that what he had promised he was able also to perform.

4. This may serve to quicken our Devotion, and encourage us to call upon him; for he is both able to supply our Wants, and hath declar'd himself ever ready and willing to do so: God is infinite in Power, and able to do abundantly above all that we can ask or think. Hence our Saviour, in the close of that Prayer he gave us, hath taught us to say, *For thine is the Kingdom, the Power and Glory;* which may put Life into our Petitions, and encourage us to hope for an Answer to them.

5. This may teach us Contentment in every Condition; for the Almighty Disposer of all things deals out to every one their Portion, and may dispose of his Blessings as he pleases; and therefore we must not murmur nor repine at our lot, but be content and thankful whatever it be; if it be prosperous, let us use it to his Honour; if it be otherwise, let us patiently submit to his Will, saying with good Eli, *It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good;* and with David, *I was dumb, and open'd not my Mouth, because it was thy doing,* Psal. 39. 9.

6. From

6. From God's Almighty Power in disposing of all Events, we may learn not to engage in any unwarrantable Plots or Designs, for there is no Wisdom, nor Understanding, nor Counsel against the Lord; no Weapon either of Power or Policy *form'd against him can prosper*, Numb. 14. 41. He turn'd *Achitophel's* Wisdom into Folly, he infatuates the Counsels of the Mighty, and bringeth the Devices of the Wicked to no effect.

7. The Consideration of God's Omnipotence may afford abundant Consolation to the Church and People of God; for they are under the continual Care and Inspection of an Almighty Power, which still watches over them for good, and is ever ready to preserve them: and who can desire greater Safety than to be under the Protection of an Almighty Arm? *Who shall harm you, saith the Apostle, if ye are Followers of that which is good?* 1 Pet. 3. 13. meaning, that there is an Almighty Power still presiding over them, and nothing shall hurt them while they own and stick to it: therefore let us, with the Church in the *Revelations*, cry *Allelujah, the Lord omnipotent reigneth; let us be glad, rejoice and give Honour unto him*, Rev. 19. 6.

To conclude, Let nothing shake our Faith and Confidence in him, nothing lessen our Love and Fear of him, nothing withdraw our Honour and Obedience from him: so shall we, who enjoy the Comfort and Benefit of his Almighty Power here, be for ever happy in celebrating the Praises and Glory of it hereafter.

DISCOURSE VI.

Gen. I. 1. *In the Beginning God created the Heaven and the Earth.*

HAVING explain'd the Nature and Notion of God's Omnipotence, from the word *Almighty*, I proceed now to the highest Instance and Demonstration of it, contain'd in the last Clause of this Article, in those words, *Maker of Heaven and Earth*; of which I shall treat from the words read, *In the Beginning God created the Heaven and the Earth*. Where I must enquire,

First,

First, What is here meant by the Heaven and the Earth.

Secondly, How both these are said to be made.

Thirdly, Why the making of them is peculiarly ascrib'd to God the Father. For the

First, We read that the antient *Hebrews* had no one word to signify the World, and therefore were wont to express it by these two, *Heaven and Earth*, and sometimes more, adding, *the Sea and all things therein*. This is the general Language of the Old Testament, and is frequently follow'd and retain'd in the New. The Heavens and the Earth (we know) are the two great constituent parts of the World, and are indeed the two great Apartments of this large and spacious Fabrick: yea we find the World often represented in Scripture as a great House, Building, or Temple, where the Heavens are as it were the Arched Roof or Canopy, the Seat of the superior invisible Beings; the Earth as the Floor or Pavement, where Mankind and all other Creatures walk and inhabit. Now because the whole differs not from the Parts taken together and united, therefore by the Heaven and the Earth here we are to understand the whole World, together with all Things and Creatures moving and subsisting therein. But to speak more particularly,

By the *Heaven* here, we are to understand all that spacious and superior Region that encompasses the Globe of the Earth, which hangs like a Ball in the middle of it, and is as the Point and Center of the Universe; this wide and vast Circumference includes not only the Firmament, the Sky, and the starry Heavens, but likewise the whole Atmosphere, containing the Air, with the Clouds, Vapors and Meteors in it. Moreover,

By the *Heavens* here some understand the Angels, together with the invisible Regions of their Abode and Residence; these are in Scripture stil'd, *the Third Heavens*; the Inhabitants whereof are sometimes call'd *Thrones, Dominions, Principalities and Powers*; sometime *the Host of Heaven*: by which are meant, not only the material sensible Parts (the bright and beautiful Lamps of Heaven, the Sun, Moon and Stars expos'd to our view) but those more pure and refin'd Beings that are indiscernible to our Senses, and inhabit the Regions of Bliss and Immortality, incircling the Throne of God, and always beholding his Face: These are the Heavens.

By

By the *Earth* here, we understand this inferior World, where Mankind and all other Creatures *live, move, and have their being*; the material visible frame of the Universe, together with all the Parts of it, both animate and inanimate. In short then, by *Heaven and Earth*, we are to understand the whole World, and all things in it, visible and invisible, which are here, and in sundry other places of Scripture, said to be made; and are reckon'd the Works and Operations of a Divine Hand. And this will lead us

Secondly, To consider how these things are said to be made. And here to pass by the Opinion of *Aristotle* concerning the Eternity of the World, in which he was singular, himself confessing that all the Philosophers before and besides himself, unanimously affirm'd that the World was made: I say, to pass by this, there are two ways by which the World may be suppos'd to be made, *viz.* either, 1. out of some preexisting Matter, which is call'd *Generation*: Or, 2. out of Nothing, which is call'd *Creation*. Accordingly we find two Opinions about the way and manner of God's making the World. The

One is of those who conceiv'd the Matter of the World to be Eternal, and ascrib'd unto God only the forming and disposing of things in that good Order we find them; even as an Artist can frame a fair and handsom piece of Work out of rude and unshapen Materials. The

Other is of those that affirm, that Matter and all things else were made out of Nothing; thereby representing God, not as a Builder out of prepar'd Materials, but as truly and properly a Creator of the World.

1. The former of these conceiv'd, that every thing produc'd did necessarily require some preexistent Matter in order to its Production, and that Nothing could be made out of Nothing: both which are indeed true of all finite and natural Agents, whose Power being limited, require some Matter to work upon in all their Operations, by which means it is impossible for them to make something out of nothing. But if we consider the infinite Power of God, to whom nothing is impossible but what involves a Contradiction in it, we shall find this to be easy and feasible to his Omnipotence; for here is not the least Contradiction or Inconsistence. Indeed for a thing to be and not to be at the same time, is a Contradiction, and out of the reach of a Divine Power; but for

for a thing that was once Nothing to become Something, is far from it, and may be well enough done by that Almighty Agent that can do all things.

The Truth is, the mistake of these Philosophers proceeded from their observing the ordinary course of Nature, and applying the limited Agency and Imbecillity of Second Causes to the First: because no created Artificer is able to produce any thing without some Matter or Subject prepar'd to receive its Influence, therefore they conclude, that an infinite Omnipotent Agent must require the same; not considering the vast difference and disproportion of the Agents; the one having no Power at all but what the other gives him, and the other having all Power in himself, without any defect or limitation. 'Tis Impotence and want of Power that requires Matter for our Activity, which must therefore be remov'd from a Perfect and Omnipotent Being; and if there can be no difficulty in any Creature that can hinder his Action, sure that which is Nothing can put no bar to it.

Moreover, this Opinion supposes Matter to be Eternal and Unmade, which is to make it God; for whatever is unmade is God, and whatever is made, or does or can exist, must be made by him: so that if Matter be or exist, it must have its Being from him, who is the first Cause of all things. Besides, the Holy Scriptures tell us, that God made all things, of which Matter is a great part; and what reason have we to limit the Divine Power, or make an Exception to it where he hath made none?

Again, God is said to be the Proprietor and Possessor of all things, because he made them; so that if Matter be not made by him, he can have no right to dispose or govern it, which would exempt a great part of the Universe from his Jurisdiction. Yea,

To make Matter eternal, uncreate and independent, is to make it equal with God; for nothing but God can be so.

Lastly, 'Tis confess'd, that Angels and Spirits, and all immaterial Beings are made; and therefore well may Matter be believ'd to be made by him, which is so far below them in Nature and Dignity; for he that did the greater, was surely able to do the less. So that this Opinion, that Matter was from Eternity, and that God requires some disposed Matter to work upon, is both absurd and irrational, and highly derogatory to his Almighty Power.

It remains then that we believe,

Z

2. That

2. That God made the World by Creation, that is, out of Nothing: for so our Text expressly tells us, *In the beginning God created the Heaven and the Earth*: And then it follows, *The Earth was without form and void*; that is, he first made the Matter of both out of Nothing, which in the beginning was void of all Form and Order, a confused mishapen Mass; and after put it into Frame and Order, raising this goodly Structure, and furnishing it with a beautiful Variety of all Kinds of Creatures, making Man the Lord of All, and giving him the Command of all the Works of his Hand. This we are taught in sundry other places of Holy Scripture: *By him* (says St. Paul) *were all things created which are in Heaven, and in Earth, both those that are visible, and those that are invisible; whether they be Thrones or Dominions, Principalities or Powers, all things were created by him, and for him*, Col. 1. 16. All which he made out of Nothing, *calling things which were not, as tho they were*. And therefore the Apostle wills us to believe the Creation of the World, whereby *Things that are seen, were made of those that did not appear*; that is, whereby the visible World was made out of Nothing.

And all this without any labour or difficulty, *for he spake the Word and it was done, he commanded and they were created*; which shews not only his Almighty Power, but his Infinite Wisdom, who hath made all things in *Number, Weight and Measure*: which made the Psalmist cry out, *How manifold are thy Works, O Lord! in Wisdom hast thou made them all, the Earth is full of thy Riches*.

If it be ask'd, why God created the World? The Apostle answers, 'twas *for his own good Will and Pleasure*; for there could be no Motive in Nothing, nor could we desire or deserve any thing before we were; and therefore we find the Church acknowledging, *Thou hast created all things, and for thy Pleasure they are and were created*. 'Twas purely to communicate himself to his Creatures, and to display his transcendent Power, Wisdom and Goodness. And this will bring me to the

Last thing propounded, namely, Why the making of the World is peculiarly attributed to God the Father.

Now this is done,

Partly to distinguish him from the Idols and false Gods of the Heathens, which were at best but the Creatures of God, or the Workmanship of mens hands; and therefore St. Paul exhorted the men of *Lystra to turn from those Vanities to the living God, who made Heaven and Earth*, Acts 14. Partly

Partly likewise to distinguish him from the other Persons of the Blessed Trinity; for both the Son and the Holy Ghost, in an unconceivable manner deriving their Godhead from the Father, derive likewise their Power from him, who alone hath all Power originally in and from himself. Hence we find our Saviour acknowledging, *The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do.* And he that is the Father of Christ, is properly the Creator of the World; and consequently the making of Heaven and Earth is primarily and principally to be ascrib'd to the Father, who is said to make the World *by the Son, and with the Holy Spirit*, to shew us the Priority and Eminence of the Father above the rest. This is the Language of the Holy Scripture, and the Sense of the Catholick Church about this great Mystery.

Now because all the Attributes and Works of God are instructive of some Duties; therefore from God's being the Maker of Heaven and Earth, we may learn,

1. To give him the intire Honour and Glory of all his Works; saying with the Church in the *Revelations*, *Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive Honour, Glory and Praise; for thou hast created all things, and for thy Pleasure they are and were created*, Rev. 4. 18. We find the Psalmist, that great Master of Thanksgivings, touching upon this string almost in every Psalm; every where magnifying the Works, and extolling the infinite Wisdom, Power and Goodness that shine so brightly in them. Again,

2. God's making the World, and all the Creatures in it, is the Motive and Foundation of all Religious Worship, which is due to him by right of Creation, and to none else; and therefore the Psalmist calls upon us to *worship and fall down, and kneel before the Lord our Maker*. Saints and Angels are all but Creatures like our selves; and therefore our Saviour's Charge is, *Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.*

Moreover, 3. The Sense of the Divine Power and Goodness in making and preserving us, should fill our Hearts with Love, Joy, Gratitude and Obedience to him who gave us our Being, and engage us to serve him with constant and humble Adorations. Again,

4. God's making the World is a sure Foundation for our Hope and Trust in him, and a just ground of Consolation in all distress; *My Help cometh from the Lord* (says the Psalmist) *who made Heaven and Earth*, Psal. 121. 2. Happy is he who hath the God of Jacob for his help, whose Hope is in him that made Heaven and

Earth, the Sea and all that dwell therein; certainly he must be a Man of little Faith, that can distrust such an Almighty Power. How much wiser is it to say with *Jeremiah*; *Behold thou, O Lord, hast made Heaven and Earth by thy great Power, and there is nothing too hard for thee*, Jer. 32. 17.

Lastly to conclude, from God's being the maker of Heaven and Earth, we may learn, in the discharge of our Duty, to rely upon him for all necessary Provision here on Earth, and finally to expect the promis'd Reward and Happiness hereafter in Heaven.

And this may suffice for the first Article of the Creed, contain'd in those words, *I believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of Heaven and Earth.*

DISCOURSE VII.

Mat. 1. 21. *Thou shalt call his Name JESUS, for he shall save his People from their Sins.*

I Finish'd the first Article of the Creed the last time, which related to the first Person in the Blessed Trinity.

I come now to the Second, relating to the Second Person in it, contain'd in these words, *And in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord.* Where we must supply the first word, *I believe*, and then the Profession of our Faith in the Second Person in the Trinity, will amount to these four things.

1st. That he is our Saviour, imply'd in the word *Jesus*.

2^{ly}. That he is the Messiah, or Anointed of God, in the word *Christ*.

3^{ly}. That he is the *only Son of God*. And,

4^{ly}. That he is *Our Lord*.

All which being great and weighty Truths, necessary to be known of every Christian, must be distinctly and particularly handled.

I begin with the First thing here attributed to him, which is, a Saviour, imply'd in the word *Jesus*; of which I am to speak from these words, *Thou shalt call his Name Jesus, for he shall save his People from their Sins.* Where we may observe,

1. That the Son of God receiv'd his Name at the usual time of Circumcision, therein complying with the Orders and Customs of the Jewish Church, under which he was born, whose Example herein is a good Precedent to teach us to do likewise.

2. We may observe, that the Name then given him was not impos'd at random, but for a great and weighty Reason he was call'd *Jesus*, because *he was to save his People from their Sins*: Which may teach us, in giving Names, not to impose any vain or idle ones, but such as are memorative of some Blessing, or instructive of some Duty. To believe in *Jesus* then, is to believe in a Saviour, for so the word both in Greek and Hebrew signifies. And as Creation was before attributed to the Father, so is Redemption or Salvation here ascrib'd to the Son. And this will lead us to enquire,

First, What this Salvation is.

Secondly, How it was obtain'd and effected for us.

Thirdly, To whom this Salvation belongs. For the

First, The Salvation here imply'd in the Name of *Jesus*, is double, *viz.* a saving People from their Sins; and what is the Consequent of it, a restoring them to that Happiness which by their Sins they had lost and forfeited.

1st. I say, the Salvation imply'd in the Name of *Jesus*, is a saving of People from their Sins; for this reason our Text tells us was this Name given him: and indeed there is *no other Name given under Heaven, whereby we can be saved, than the Name of our Lord Jesus*, Acts 4. 12. This is so peculiar to our Saviour, that *there is no Salvation in any other*. Hence St. John tells us, he came *to convince the World of Sin*; that is, of the folly and danger of it; and not only so, but he came *to bless Mankind, by turning them from their Iniquities*, Acts 3. 26. Sin is indeed the rise and spring of all our Misery, and the removing of that is the removing the Fountain of all Evil, and the rescuing us from temporal and eternal Misery.

But in what sense is Christ said to save his People from their Sins? Why, chiefly in these three Senses; from the Power and Dominion of Sin, from the Filth and Pollution of it, and from the Guilt and Punishment of it: each of which will require a brief Explication.

1. Christ, as our Jesus, saves us from the Power and Dominion of Sin, breaking the Force of its Temptations, and destroying its Empire in the Soul. 'Tis indeed the Infelicity of our present State, not to be totally free from the Being of Sin; that is reserv'd for the Happiness of a future State. At present we are assaulted by the Importunity of our Lusts, and are forc'd to combat some remainders of Corruption; but yet Christ has so vanquish'd the Power of it, that it *shall not reign in our mortal Bodies*, or force us *to obey it in the Lusts thereof*. If we resist its Temptations, it can have no Power over us; the Sinner indeed that yields to it, becomes a Slave to his Lusts, and a Vassal to his vile Affections, he surrenders himself into the Hands of an Enemy that is conquer'd for him, and becomes a willing Bondslave to the worst of Tyrants: whereas by withstanding the Sollicitations to Sin, we enervate all its Power, which without our own Consent can have no more Dominion over us.

2. Christ saves his People, as from the Power, so from the Pollution of Sin. The Defilement of Original Sin he has caus'd to be wash'd away in the Waters of Baptism: and as for all actual Transgressions, he has so order'd it, that the Pollution of them is purg'd away by the Waters of Repentance, and the Tears of a Godly Sorrow.

3. Christ saves his People from the Guilt and Punishment of Sin: all Sin being a Breach of God's Laws, renders Men obnoxious to Punishment; that is, to no less than Death, both Temporal, Spiritual and Eternal: *For the Wages of Sin is Death*, Rom. 6. 23. But our blessed Saviour has deliver'd us from the Sentence and Curse of the Law, which cannot now thunder out Wrath, or threaten us with Death; who are no longer under the Law, but under Grace: *For tho the Wages of Sin is Death, yet the Gift of God is Eternal Life, through Jesus Christ our Lord*. Which will lead us

To the 2d part of that Salvation, which Jesus Christ as our Saviour has wrought out for us; and that is, his restoring us to that Happiness, which by our Sins we had lost and forfeited. Our first Parents shut themselves out of Paradise by the first Transgression, and thereby entail'd a Curse upon their Posterity ever since. Now Christ came to restore us to a better Paradise, and has accordingly turn'd the former Curse into a greater Blessing; for which he is very properly call'd Jesus a Saviour. We find such as have done any signal or eminent Service

for their Country, either by delivering it from any great Evils, or doing it any great Good, have been stil'd sometimes Fathers, sometimes Saviours of their Country: *Joshua*, which in *Hebrew* is the same Name with *Jesus*, was so call'd for his leading the *Israelites* out of the Wilderness into the promis'd Land of *Canaan*, and was therein a Type of our blessed Saviour; who leading his People into a better Land of Promise, even into Heaven it self, may be more justly stil'd by the Name of *Jesus* a Saviour. Moreover, *Joshua* (as one has well observ'd) sav'd not *Israel* by his own Power, or of himself, but God by him: Whereas *Jesus* himself, by his own Power, even the Power of God, saves his own People, the People of God; and therefore in a much higher sense deserves the Name of *Saviour*. This is the constant Interpretation of the Name *Jesus* in Holy Scripture; *Unto you is born this day, in the City of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord*, said the Angels to the Shepherds, Luke 2. 11. *Of this Man's Seed has God, according to his Promise, rais'd unto Israel a Saviour Jesus*, Acts 13. 23.

But how has Christ obtain'd this Salvation or Redemption for us? This is our

Second Particular: In Answer to which, I say,

1. For his saving us from our Sins, that was done by shedding his own Blood, and thereby making atonement for them, for *without shedding of Blood there is no remission*; which made him appear to put away Sin by the Sacrifice of himself, Heb. 9. 22, 26. Neither could we be redeem'd with such corruptible things as Silver and Gold, for these had neither Merit or Value enough for such a Purchase; but with the precious Blood of Christ, as of a Lamb without Blemish, and without Spot, 1 Pet. 1. 18, 19.

By the first Transgression we were all sold under Sin, and thereby were in Bondage and Captivity to Satan; so that in this forlorn Estate we all stood in need of Redemption. Now it was permitted in the Law, that every one that was able might redeem himself, Levit. 25. 49. But to us this was impossible, who could not make Satisfaction for the least Offence. Again, it was allow'd, in case a Man that was sold could not redeem himself, that a Brother might redeem him, Levit. 25. 48. But this to all the Sons of Men was likewise impossible, who were all in the same Bondage, and all equally unable to help themselves. Now in this case the Son of God, who was alone able, became our Redeemer,

deemer, by laying down his own Life for the Ransom; hence we read, that *God the Father sent his Son into the World, that the World thro him might be sav'd*, John 3. 17. and that God the Son bare our Sins in his Body on the Tree, that we might have *Redemption thro his Blood, even the Forgiveness of Sins*, Col. 1. 14. which justly gives him the Title of Saviour.

2. For that other part of Salvation, even Eternal Life, the Son of God not only procur'd it for us, but has also reveal'd it to us, and declar'd the only true way that leads to it, and for that Reason well deserves the Name of Saviour; for 'twas he alone that brought *Life and Immortality to Light thro the Gospel*, which before were wrapt up in thick Darkness: *The World before* (saith the Apostle) *knew not God, till the only begotten Son, which was in the Bosom of the Father, was pleas'd to reveal him*. Since which he has open'd a new and living way for us into the Holy of Holies, and given us such plain Directions, that if we follow them, we can't miss it.

Now if the Apostles and Preachers of the Gospel, who receiv'd the Knowledge of this Salvation from Christ himself, were said to save those whom they converted by their preaching, as they frequently are in Holy Scripture; how much more truly and eminently may Christ be stil'd a Saviour, who gave them both the Commission and Directions to teach it to others?

Lastly, The Son of God may be yet more properly nam'd our Saviour, from his actual bestowing this great Salvation; for he not only procur'd and publish'd it, but alone confers it upon us: hence he is said to *be able to save to the uttermost, all those that come unto God by him*: for having all Power both in Heaven and Earth, he alone is able to bestow Salvation upon us; yea to this end did the Father give him this Power, that he should give *eternal Life to as many as he has given him*, John 17. 2. And for this reason has God exalted him with his right hand, to be a Prince and a Saviour, Acts 5. 31.

Thus we see what is meant by the Name of Jesus, and likewise for what Reasons it was given to the Second Person in the Trinity, which we all profess to believe, when we say, *I believe in Jesus*.

But is he thus a Saviour to all Men? The Answer to this leads

To the *Last* thing propounded, which was to shew to whom this Salvation belongs; which our Text tells us, are his own People;

People; for he is said to *save his People from their Sins*, that is, all, and only them, to whom he is a God, and they to him a People. He died indeed for all Men, and the Merit of his Sufferings and Satisfaction is sufficient to save the whole World; but because the Promise of it is not absolute, and the actual bestowing it is only upon the Conditions of Faith and Repentance, it becomes effectual only to those that perform them: Hence we read, that tho he be *able to save to the uttermost*, yet 'tis only *those that come unto God by him*, Heb. 7. 25. and elsewhere, that he is *the Author of Eternal Salvation to all, and only those that obey him*, Heb. 5. 9. 'Tis not the bare Recital of the Creed, and saying we *believe in Jesus*, that will intitle us to the Salvation imply'd in it; but we must become his People in Covenant with him, and walk as such, before he will save us from our Sins, or bring us to his Glory.

In short then, Christ is truly and properly a Saviour, because *he saves his People from their Sins*: that is, by the Power of his Grace, he destroys the Dominion of Sin; by the Virtue of his Blood, he gives the Remission of it; and by advancing them to Glory, will take away the very Being and Possibility of sinning any more: So that the Power, the Pollution, and the Guilt of Sin being remov'd, there can be *no Condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus*. Moreover, he has destroy'd Death the Wages of Sin, and him that had the Power of Death, the Devil, the great Instigator to it; and by both secures to them Eternal Life.

The Lessons we may learn hence are many: I shall mention a few; as

1. We learn hence where to go, and from whom to hope for Salvation, namely to our Lord Jesus Christ, who alone obtain'd and can only confer it upon us; for *there is no Salvation in any other, neither is there any other Name under Heaven by which we can be sav'd*; and therefore 'tis in vain to seek to, or rely upon any other.

2. We learn hence the Terms upon which alone we may hope for Life and Salvation from him, namely upon the Conditions of Faith and Repentance, which he has made necessary to intitle us to it: he is a Saviour to none but his own People, who believe his Doctrine and obey his Precepts; neither does he save any from their Sins, but such as repent and turn from them, without which 'tis Vanity and Presumption to expect it.

3. We learn hence to bless and magnify the unspeakable Love and Goodness of God, in providing so well for the Salvation of Mankind, and sending his own Son to be the Saviour of the World: This we are taught from the Hymn of *Zacharias*, whom we find praising God for *raising up this Horn of Salvation for us in the House of his Servant David, to save us from our Enemies, and the Hands of all that hate us.* And good old *Simeon* desir'd to see nothing more, when *his Eyes had seen this great Salvation.*

4. We may learn hence what a high Value and Esteem we are to have for the Name of *Jesus*, which *is above every Name*, at which the Apostle would have *every Knee to bow*, and all things in Heaven and Earth to do Homage and Reverence.

Lastly, We may learn hence so to demean our selves towards our blessed Saviour, as to attain an Interest in his Salvation; without it we are undone for ever: *For how shall we escape if we neglect so great Salvation?* And with it we shall be eternally happy; *For he is able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by him.* Wherefore let us so believe in *Jesus*, as to love, honor, and obey him; so shall we receive the end of our Faith, the Salvation of our Souls.

DISCOURSE VIII.

John 1. 41. We have found the Messias, which is, being interpreted, The Christ.

I Have spoken of the first Name given to the Second Person in the Trinity, and shew'd what it is to *believe in Jesus*: I come now to the second, which is *Christ*; I believe in *Jesus Christ*. Of which I shall treat from the words read, *We have found the Messias, which is, by Interpretation, the Christ.* Where I must shew,

First, The Import and Meaning of the word *Christ*.

Secondly, That *Jesus* is truly and properly *The Christ*.

Thirdly, The Grounds and Reasons upon which we believe him to be so.

And Lastly, What Influence this Belief is to have on our Practice. I begin

First,

First, With the Import and Meaning of the word *Christ*, which is the same in Greek with *Messias* in Hebrew, and both signify *The Anointed*. *I know the Messias cometh, which is called Christ*, saith the Woman of Samaria, John 4. 24. And here *Andrew* tells *Peter*, *We have found the Messias, which is, being interpreted, The Christ*. The Sense of both which is, that they had found the Person that was anointed of God, and thereby design'd for the great Work of Man's Redemption. We read in Scripture, that Persons appointed to any great and publick Office were wont to be anointed; thus Kings, Priests, and Prophets were usually set apart and consecrated by this Ceremony. *I have called David my Servant* (saith God) *with my holy Oil have I anointed him*. *Aaron* and his Sons were commanded to be anointed, to qualify them to minister in the Priests Office, Ex. 30. 30. And the Prophets were generally by *Unction* invested into their Office: *Elisha the Son of Shaphat* (saith God to *Elijah*) *shalt thou anoint to be Prophet in thy room*, 1 Kings 19. 16.

Accordingly the Son of God, who is both the King, Priest, and Prophet of his Church, was anointed with the most sacred Oil, and thereby consecrated to that high and holy Office, of which all the Employments under the Law, where Oil was us'd, were but Types and Shadows: for which reason he is said to be *anointed with the Oil of Gladness above his Fellows*, and to have the Spirit poured out upon him without measure; which in the most eminent manner gives him the Title of *The Christ*, or Anointed of God.

But that we may not doubt or mistake the Person, I proceed,

Secondly, To shew that *Jesus*, in whom we believe in our Creed, is that very *Christ* or true *Messias* that was anointed or set apart by God for this great Work.

That such a Divine extraordinary Person was to come, in whom all the Nations of the Earth should be blessed, we learn from many plain Promises and Prophecies in the Old Testament. That such a one was earnestly expected to come into the World, at the time when our Saviour came into it, is evident from sundry Passages of the New Testament: 'Twas a frequent Question among the Jews, *Where is he that should be born King of the Jews?* When *St. John* appear'd, the Jews sent Priests and Levites to ask him, *whether he were the Christ or no*: and we find others questioning him, *Art thou he*

that should come, or must we look for another? Which shews that there was a general Expectation of the coming of the *Messias* at that time.

That many upon our Saviour's Birth and Appearance in the World took him for the true *Messias*, is evident from the History of the Gospel: Some were convinc'd by the Excellence of his Doctrine, as the *Samaritans*, *We heard him our selves* (say they) *and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the World*, Luke 2. 38. Others by his Miracles, saying, *We know that he came from God, for none could do the Works that he did, except God were with him*: and we find many upon sundry occasions acknowledging, *Of a Truth, this is that great Prophet that is to come into the World*. Which Truth, by the Ministry of the Apostles, and others authoriz'd to preach it, hath obtain'd in most Parts of the World, who are, by the Spreading and Success of the Gospel, profelyted to this Belief, that Jesus is the Christ. Moreover,

That the time appointed by God for the coming of the *Messias* is already expir'd, and consequently that the *Messias* is come, is plain from the expresse Prophecies of Holy Scripture; *Jacob's* Prediction made the Departure of the Scepter from *Judah*, and a Law-giver from between his Feet, the time of *Shiloh's* or the *Messias's* coming, Gen. 49. 10. Now the Scepter or Government being wholly gone from that Tribe, and no Law-giver left between his Feet, we may safely conclude that the *Messias* is come. Again,

Both the Prophecies of *Haggai* and *Malachi* plainly declare the coming of the *Messias* to be during the second Temple; for both of them tell us, that he, who was the Desire of all Nations, should come and fill that House with his Glory, and by that means the Glory of this latter House should be greater than the former, Hag. 2. 6, 7. and Mal. 5. 1. Both which Prophecies were fulfil'd at our Saviour's being presented, and after appearing in the Temple; which gave a greater Glory to that Structure, than the former could boast of. Now it plainly appearing by these Prophecies that the *Messias* was to come during the standing of the second Temple, which he was to grace and adorn with his Presence; and being now as certain that that Temple is so far from standing, that there is not one Stone left on another, we may from thence evidently conclude, that the promised *Messiah* is already come.

But because the Jews are the greatest Infidels and Unbelievers in this point, it will be requisite, both for the convincing of them, and confirming of others, to proceed,

Thirdly,

Thirdly, To the Grounds and Reasons why we believe Jesus to be the Christ, or he that was born of the *Virgin Mary* to be the true promis'd *Messiah*. In proving of which, because we have to do only with the Jews, who own the Authority of *Moses* and the Prophets, the most proper Method of Conviction will be to fetch our Arguments thence. If then all the Promises and Predictions relating to the Messiah in the Old Testament, be exactly fulfil'd in the Person of him whom we acknowledg for our Saviour and no other, we may safely say with those in the Text, *We have found the Messiah, which is, by Interpretation, the Christ*: and that so it is, will be evident to any that will but compare them together.

The first Promise of the Messiah in Paradise stiles him, *The Seed of the Woman*, Gen. 3. 15. to which the Prophecy of *Isaiah* adds, that he was to be *conceiv'd and born of a Virgin*, Isa. 9. 8. The Promise made to *Abraham* calls him *his Seed*, which was to be a Blessing to all Nations, Gen. 18. 18. After which we read, that he was to be of the Tribe of *Judah*, and of the Stock and Lineage of *David*: *Jacob* fix'd the time of his coming, which was upon the *Departure of the Scepter from Judah*, and *Daniel* after *70 Weeks of Years*; both which determin'd about the same time. The Prophet *Micah* pointed out the Place of his Nativity; namely, at *Bethlehem Ephrata*, which, tho one of the least among the *Hundreds of Judah*, yet became more renown'd than all the rest by the Birth of this great Person, *Mic. 6*. In the Writings of *Moses* we read, that the Messiah was to be a *great Prophet*, to reveal to the World the whole Mind and Will of God; *Deut. 18*. He was likewise to be a Priest, higher than the High Priest, to offer Sacrifice and make Intercession for the People: And lastly, he was to be a King to rule and govern his People, not with the Scepter of an earthly Kingdom, but with the Scepter of Righteousness, to prepare and advance them to a Kingdom in Heaven.

Now how punctually all these Predictions were fulfil'd, and all these Offices perform'd by our blessed Saviour, the History of the New Testament may fully inform us; where the exact Harmony and Agreement of the Event, with the Predictions in all the Circumstances of Time, Place, Manner, and other Passages relating to the Messiah, are sufficient to satisfy any considering Person that this is *the Christ*. Again,

The Characters of the Messias, *viz.* his Humility, Fortitude, Meekness, Patience, and the like, were all found in the highest degree in the Person of our Saviour; all that was foretold concerning the Manner of his Coming, his Conversation in the World, his Sufferings, his bitter Death and Passion, was all fully completed in him.

Lastly, The great Success and Efficacy that this Truth hath had on the Minds of Men, the undaunted Courage of the Apostles in preaching it, the Constancy of the Martyrs in suffering for it, the Readiness of the World to receive it, and the general Entertainment it hath met with in all Ages, notwithstanding all the Opposition made against it, are abundant Confirmation of the Truth of it, and of that Divine Power that hath all along attended it.

But how is Jesus said to be *the Christ*, or Anointed of God? Why, this must be understood not of an anointing with material Oil, such as was us'd of old in the Inauguration of Kings, and the Consecration of Priests and Prophets (for that, tho carefully kept for many years for those Purposes, was lost many hundred years before our Saviour's Birth) but of a spiritual Unction by the Holy Ghost; for so St. Peter tells us, *how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost, and with Power.* The material Oil was but a Type of this more divine and spiritual Unction; for as the Use of the former signify'd the Designation of a Person to some high Office, so by the latter was represented the divine Election and Designation of our Saviour to the Work of Man's Redemption, together with that divine Influx that accompany'd it: both which were thought most fitly represented by the Use of Oil; for as the Olive is said to be the most useful and excellent of all Trees, and is therefore said to have the Sovereignty over them, *Judg. 9. 9.* so is Christ's Name above every Name, and his Office of far greater Dignity than any other Employment. Again,

As Oil is observ'd to continue longer uncorrupted than any other Liquor, and likewise to preserve other things from Corruption; so is it hereby a fit Emblem to represent the Eternity of Christ's Kingdom, and that he is a *Priest for ever after the Order of Melchisedeck.*

But when was the Son of God thus anointed with the Holy Ghost and with Power, and thereby set apart to this great Work? This (as some have thought) was done at his Conception or Birth, when

when the Holy Ghost came upon the Blessed Virgin, and the Power of the most High overshadowed her; for which reason that Holy Thing that was born of her was called the Son of God. Others think that this was done at his Baptism, when the Holy Ghost came down and lighted upon him in the shape of a Dove, and a voice was heard from the excellent Glory, saying, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleas'd.* At which time that Scripture is said to be fulfilled; *The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the Gospel.* Both these Times may well enough consist together; for tho he was sanctified from the Womb, and design'd for this great Office, yet because he enter'd not upon it till his Baptism, the Holy Ghost then visibly descended upon him, to proclaim him to the World, and to encourage them to receive him as their King, Priest and Prophet, into all which Offices he was solemnly instal'd by the Unction of the Holy Ghost. And

This will lead us to the practical Conclusions to be drawn from it.

1. We may learn from hence stedfastly to believe and adhere to this Truth, *that Jesus is the Christ*; this is the great fundamental point of Christianity, and that which gives us the denomination of Christians. St. John tells us, that the end of writing his Gospel was to prove Jesus to be the Christ: St. Paul testify'd this at *Corinth* and *Thessalonica*; and generally we find all the Apostles publishing and proving every where, that *Jesus is the Christ*. This is the Test and Touchstone of Christianity: he that believeth that *Jesus is the Christ* (saith St. John) *is born of God*.

He that believeth it not, is not only a Liar himself, but hath made God a Liar; yea, he is Antichrist, denying both the Father and the Son: And therefore to prove us, what we pretend to be, *Christians*, we must continue firm and stedfast in this Faith.

2. This Belief must engage us in Actions futable thereunto, behaving our selves becoming that great Office he hath taken upon himself, and worthy those good Offices he thereby performs towards us; that is,

If we believe him to be a Prophet sent from God, we must readily receive and embrace his Doctrine.

If we believe him to be a Priest, ordain'd to atone and intercede for the People, we must willingly cast our selves upon his Sacrifice and Intercession.

If we believe him to be a King, appointed to rule and govern his Church, we must chearfully obey his Laws, and live in the Observation of his Precepts. Without these Things, our Practice will bely our Profession, and instead of honouring we shall blaspheme the Holy Name of Christ, by which we are called. Unless we answer the Name of Christian (which we derive from him) by a sutable Conversation, we can have no advantage from that Appellation, nor can we be honoured by that Title while we dishonour him that gives it.

3. From Christ's being the anointed of God, we derive an Unction from him: for as *the Ointment poured on the Head of Aaron, not only drench'd his Beard, but ran down to the skirts of his Clothing*; even so the Holy Spirit, that was poured on Christ as the Head, reaches not only the principal Members, but runs down to the lowest parts of his Body; hence St. John declares, that *we have an Unction from the Holy one, and the anointing which we have receiv'd from him abideth in us*, 1 John 2. 20, 27.

Some are anointed to rule and instruct the Church, who are therefore said to be *made Kings and Priests unto God and the Father*, Rev. 1. 6. Others are anointed with the Gifts and Graces of the Holy Spirit, for the discharge of the Duties of their several Places and Callings; all which are deriv'd to us from the Unction of this divine and sacred Person. Wherefore in the

Last place, we should for ever own and celebrate the signal Love of God the Father, in sending his Son into the World, and anointing him with his Holy Spirit, for the Redemption of Mankind, never forgetting those invaluable Blessings of which we are made partakers thereby. And likewise we are to demean our selves with all due Respect and Obedience towards them, whom he hath establish'd and anointed in Christ for the carrying on of this great Work: *Touch not mine anointed* (saith God) *and do my Prophets no harm*; but rather *esteem them highly for their Works sake*, that they may render their Accounts with Joy to the great Shepherd and Bishop of our Souls, who hath sent them, as his Father sent him for our Salvation; so shall we duly express our Faith in the Son of God, as our *Jesus*, and his *Christ*.

DISCOURSE IX.

John 1. 14. *We beheld his Glory, the Glory as of the only begotten of the Father.*

I Have explain'd to you two great Titles given to the second Person in the ever Blessed Trinity, viz.

The name of *Jesus*, which we have seen to signify a Saviour: And the name of *Christ*, which being interpreted is the Anointed of God. There remain yet two great Titles more given to him in Holy Scripture; the

One taken from the relation he bears to God, as *his only Son*.

The other from the relation he bears to us, as *our Lord*.

Both which containing matter, not only of Honour to him, but of Duty and Privilege unto us, must be particularly spoken to. Of the

First of these, namely, the relation he bears to God the Father, I am now to treat, from these words of St. John, *We beheld his Glory, as of the only begotten Son of the Father*. Where I must shew,

First, In what sense Christ is said to be the Son of God.

Secondly, How he is said to be his only Son, or the only begotten of the Father. And

Lastly, Conclude with the Duties that this Belief engages to. For the

First, That the Messias was to be in a special manner the Son of God was foretold by the Prophets, and generally believ'd by the Jews; accordingly we find, after his appearance, that all that took him for the one, still gave him the Stile and Character of the other: thus *Nathaniel* that true *Israelite* greets him, *Rabbi thou art the Son of God, thou art the King of Israel*, John 1. 49. *Martha* thus declares her Faith in him, *Lord, I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, that was to come into the World*, John 11. 27. The High Priest adjured our Saviour by the living God, to tell him *whether he were the Christ the Son of God*, as thinking he could not be the one without being the other, *Mat. 26. 63*. And that famous Confession of St. *Peter*, made in the name of all the

Apostles, was, *We believe and know that thou art Christ the Son of the living God*, Mat. 16. 16.

But in what sense are we to believe Christ to be the *Son of God*? why, not as we are by Creation, for he was before all Worlds; and we read that God the Father by him made all Things, and so he could not be made himself: nor by Regeneration, for that supposes such a Corruption of Nature, as requires a new Birth, which cannot in any wise be affirm'd of him: nor yet by Adoption, for that implies a former state of Alienation, which may not be suppos'd in him, who was always one with the Father. So that we must find out some more eminent and nobler Ground of this Relation. For the better understanding whereof, we must consider our Blessed Saviour, both as to his human and divine Nature; for in both these respects he is said to be the Son of God. As for his human Nature, he receiv'd that by the Holy Ghost's overshadowing the Blessed Virgin, without the intervention of any natural Parent, or Act of Generation; and so having no other Father but God, he is in an eminent manner stil'd the Son of God, as we read *Luke* 1. 35.

Again, 2. Being in his human Nature set apart for the Execution of a high Office under the Father, for the teaching, ruling and well governing his Church, he is thereby eminently stil'd the *Son of God*; as we read, *Psal.* 2. 6, 7. for the faithful discharge of which Office, he was by a voice from Heaven publickly declar'd the *beloved Son of God*, in whom he was well pleas'd: which was twice done, to wit, at his Baptism, and his Transfiguration; as we read, *Mat.* 3. 16, 17. and *Mat.* 17. 5. Moreover,

3. Christ being in his human Nature rais'd from the Dead, by the power of the Father, is thereby stil'd the *Son of God*; for this being in a manner the giving of a new Life, may be said to give a new relation of Sonship: hence he is call'd, *The First-born from the Dead*, that in all things he might have the Preheminence, *Col.* 1. 18. and elsewhere he is declar'd, the *Son of God with Power by his Resurrection from the Dead*.

Again, 4. From Christ's being in his human Nature made Heir of all Things in his Father's House, he is farther stil'd the *Son of God*; for inheriting is both a Sign and a Right of Sonship: *If Sons, then Heirs*. By this the Apostle tells us, he was made better than the Angels, having by Inheritance obtain'd a more excellent name than they; for to which of the Angels said he at any time

as to him, *Thou art my Son, this Day have I begotten thee?* Heb. 1. 3, 4, 5.

But tho all these are high and eminent ways and degrees of Sonship, yet they are not so peculiar to our Saviour as to denominate him his only Son: For *Adam* was the Son of God, without any intervening Act of Generation: And the Angels are so his Sons, as to have no other Father but him. Tho Christ be said to be the First-born from the Dead, yet there are others follow him in the Resurrection, and are therefore likewise stil'd the Sons of God; and tho Christ by virtue of his Sonship be made *Heir of all*, yet we are said likewise to be *Heirs of God, and Co-heirs with Jesus Christ*, having a Portion too in our Father's House, and made sharers of the Inheritance, which rather follows Sonship than makes it. So that

There remains yet a higher and more peculiar Ground of this Relation, whereby he is in a singular manner above all others said to be *the only Son*, and *the only begotten Son of God*. And what is that? why, for the understanding hereof, we must proceed,

Secondly, To consider our Saviour with respect to his divine Nature, and by that means we may discover something of that high and eminent Relation of Sonship that is peculiar to Christ alone; by virtue whereof he is the only begotten Son of the Father, in a way that never was or can be affirm'd of any other. To which end we must observe,

1. That Christ had another Nature or Being before and beside that which he receiv'd from the Blessed Virgin; for the Scripture assures us, that he was truly in Heaven, and came down from thence before he was begotten of her, and that he after *ascended to the place where he was before*, John 6. 62. *John* the Baptist declares that Christ *was before him*, tho he was born and came into the World after him, John 1. 15. Yea we find himself declaring, *Before Abraham was I am*, John 8. 58. meaning, that he had a real Being or Existence before *Abraham* had any, and consequently before he himself was born of the Virgin, which was many hundred Years after; and elsewhere he speaks of the *Glory he had with his Father before the World was*. By which it appears,

2. That the Being which Christ had before his Conception and Birth of the Blessed Virgin, could be no other than the divine Nature; for 'tis said to be *before all Worlds*, that God *made the*

World by him, and that all Things were made by him and for him: All the Acts of a divine Power, such as forgiving of Sins, raising the Dead, healing all manner of Diseases with a word's speaking, and the like, are frequently in Scripture ascrib'd to him; yea, all the incommunicable Properties of the Deity, such as Eternity, Immensity, Omnipotence, Omniscience and Omnipresence, are all attributed to him; which plainly prove the Divinity of his Nature and Person. To this we must add,

3. That Christ had not this divine Nature originally from himself but from another; hence we find the Son often confessing, that he is not of himself, that he spake not of himself, that he could do nothing of himself: all which Expressions shew that he deriv'd his Essence and Power from another.

4. Therefore the Son receiv'd this divine Nature by an eternal Communication of it from the Father; by virtue whereof he truly said, *All Things whatsoever the Father hath are mine*, John 16. 15. meaning, that both have the fulness of the Godhead, and neither can have any more: upon which account Christ declares, *I and my Father are one*; and elsewhere, that he *thought it no Robbery or Usurpation to be equal with God*, as having the same divine Nature; but yet with this Difference, the Father hath it Originally from himself, the Son by Communication from the Father. In which respect we find him declaring, *my Father is greater than I*; the one being as it were the Original, the other the Copy, the Image and Reflection of the Deity: so the Apostle styles him, *The brightness of the Father's Glory, and the express Image or Character of his Person*, Heb. 1. 3. He is the internal Word or Mind of God, the Life, Wisdom, and Power of the Father: for as *the Father hath Life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have Life in himself*; and from his deriving both his Essence and Power in this ineffable manner from the Father, he is truly and properly stil'd the Son of God. Moreover,

Lastly, There being no other that ever had the Godhead in this manner communicated to him, he is therefore said to be *the only Son, or the only begotten of the Father*; none beside him could ever say, *I and my Father are one*, that *the Father is in me, and I in him*, and that *I came out from the Father*. These Expressions betoken such a Communication of the divine Nature to him, as could never be affirm'd of any other. Indeed the Unity of the Godhead forbids us to believe any farther Multiplication of the divine Essence; and as no reason of ours could

in-

inform us of Christ's being thus begotten of the Father, so no Revelation hath recorded the like or the same of any other: for tho Christ be sometimes stil'd *the First-born among many Brethren*, and for that reason *is not asham'd* (as the Apostle tells us) *to call us Brethren*, yet that is to be understood not of a like Communication of the Godhead, but of their Adoption to the same Inheritance: And tho the Holy Ghost hath likewise the divine Nature communicated to him, by which he is said to be one with the Father and the Son; yet that is not by the way of a natural and eternal Generation, but by an unaccountable way of Procession, which makes him not the Son, but the Gift of God.

And now we are arriv'd as high in the knowledg of this great Mystery as our present State and Circumstances will admit; having shew'd how Christ is the Son of God, both as to his human and divine Nature.

In respect of the former, he is so by Generation, as begotten of him; by Commission, as sent by him; by Resurrection, as rais'd from the Dead by him; and by Inheritance, as being made by him Heir of all Things. Some of which being common to him with others, he is in a sense common with them denominated the Son of God.

In respect of the latter, he is so by an ineffable and eternal Communication of the Godhead; which being peculiar to him alone, he is thereby stil'd *the only Son of God*, and *the only begotten of the Father*.

All that remains is, to shew what Influence the Belief hereof ought to have upon our Minds and Practice. And

1. From Christ's being in this eminent manner the Son of God, we may rest abundantly satisfy'd in the value and sufficiency of his Sacrifice: for tho we our selves, by reason of the meanness of our Persons, could not make a sufficient Compensation for the breach of the divine Laws, nor thereby appease an infinite and offended Deity; yet he who was of the same Nature and Substance with the Father, was able to effect all this for us; the Dignity of his Person put an infinite worth and efficacy into his Atonement: and tho we could merit no favour at the hands of God, nor satisfy for the least offence committed against him, yet he is worthy for whom he should do this and far greater Things. Nor is it to be wonder'd at that the Blood of his dearest Son, in whom he is well pleas'd, should be so precious in his sight; for what offence can be so hainous that his Blood cannot wash away?

away? or what Debt so great that the Son of God cannot satisfy? Hence the Apostle tells us, that tho *the Blood of Bulls, or of Goats*, or indeed of any mere Man cannot do away Sin, yet the *Blood of Christ, the Son of God, purgeth us from all Sin.*

2. From Christ's being the Son of God, we learn what Honour and Adoration is to be paid him; for being thereby one in Essence, and equal in Majesty with the Father, *We are to honour the Son, even as we honour the Father.* We read, that *all the Angels in Heaven were call'd upon him to worship him, and that all things in Heaven and Earth, and under the Earth, are to bow the Knee, and do him Reverence.* How much more ought we to ascribe Honour, and Praise, and Glory to him *that sitteth upon the Throne, and the Lamb for evermore?*

3. We learn hence the infinite Goodness of God, in giving his Son, his own darling and beloved Son, for our Redemption; *God so loved the World* (saith St. John) *that he gave his only begotten Son, that we might live thro him.* This is such a high instance of Love, that the Apostle is at a loss how to express it. Nor is the Love of the Son less than that of the Father, who gave himself for us, and not only undertook, but compleated the great Work of our Redemption; which should engage us to the great Duties of Thankfulness, Trust, and Affiance in both: for if the Father *spared not his own Son*, and the Son *spared not his own Life*; *How shall they not with him freely give us all things?*

Lastly, From what hath been said, let us learn to confirm our Faith and Hope in the Son of God; the stedfast belief whereof will be a matter of great Benefit and Comfort to us: for *whosoever shall confess* (says St. John) *that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God*, 1 John 5. 5. As he by taking our Nature dwelt with us, so we by believing in him partake of his Divine Nature and dwell in him. This Faith will carry us above the World, and give us the victory over our ghostly Enemies: for *who is he that overcometh the World* (says the same Apostle) *but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?* 1 Joh. 4. 15. for *this is the Victory that overcometh the World, even our Faith.* Yea, this Belief will inrol us in the number of the Sons and Children of God; for *as many as received him, to them gave he Power to become the Sons of God, even as many as believed in his Name*, John 1. 12.

In a word, being hereby instructed in the knowledg of this Mystery as far as 'tis reveal'd, and consequently as far as our Capacities on this side the Grave can reach; let us here cease any farther

farther enquiry into the manner of it, submitting our Reason to Faith, and being content to believe and admire it, tho our shallow Understandings cannot at present thorowly comprehend it.

DISCOURSE X.

2 Tim. 1. 2. latter part. *And Christ Jesus our LORD.*

HAVING shew'd the Relation that Christ Jesus beareth to God the Father, *as his only begotten Son*; I proceed now to the Relation he bears to us as *our Lord*: of which I shall treat from these words, which are part of St. Paul's Salutation to Timothy, *Grace, Mercy and Peace from God the Father, and Christ Jesus our LORD.* Where we may observe,

That as the Name of *God* is sometimes in a peculiar manner attributed to the Father as the Fountain of the Deity, and the First Person in the Blessed Trinity; so the Name of *Lord* is sometimes peculiarly ascrib'd to the Son, as being next to the Father in the Rule and Government of his Church, call'd therefore the *Lord Jesus*, or *Christ Jesus our Lord*. And to call upon the Name of the Lord Jesus, is in Scripture made the Character and Cognizance of a good Christian, *None being able to call Christ Lord, but by the Holy Ghost*, 1 Cor. 12. 3. In treating therefore hereof, I must enquire,

First, What the Name of *Lord* doth import.

Secondly, In what sense Christ is so often said to be our Lord.

Thirdly, How he exerciseth this Lordship or Dominion over us.

For the *First*, The Name of *Lord* in general, imports not only Honour and Dignity, but likewise Power and Authority; for they who were antiently invested with this Title, were wont to be intrusted with some Rule and Government over others: more particularly the Name of *Lord*, as attributed to Jesus Christ, imports that Power, Dignity and Authority which he is invested withal and exerciseth over the Church. Thus we read, that *God hath given him to be Head over all things to his Church*, Ephes. 1. 22.

So.

So that if the Church be sometimes (as it frequently is in Scripture) stil'd a *Kingdom*, Christ is the King and Governor of it. Hence he is often said to be the King of *Israel*, that is, of the Church, of whose Government there shall be no end, and of whom it was truly said, *Thy Throne, O God, is for ever and ever*, Heb. 1. 8.

If the Church be sometimes call'd a *House* or *Family*, as it likewise is, Christ is the Master to order and dispose all things in it; and as the *whole Family of Heaven and Earth is nam'd of him*, so are all things in it rul'd and govern'd by him; and as a *Son is over his House*, so is Christ the Lord of his Church, *whose House are we*, Heb. 3. 6.

Again, Christ is sometimes call'd our *Teacher*, to direct and instruct his Church; and in this sense he is the sole Lord and Master of our Faith and Conscience: by virtue hereof we are to receive and believe his Doctrine, and no other beside or contrary to it; *You call me Lord and Master (says he) and you say true, for so I am; be not ye the Servants of Men*: that is, let none impose upon your Faith, or obtrude any new Doctrines upon you; *Have not many Masters, for one is your Master, even Christ*; to him you must hearken, without enthralling your Minds and Consciences to any other.

Furthermore, Christ is sometimes call'd our *Captain* and *Leader*; and as a Soldier is to observe the Orders and Commands of his General, so are we to follow the Conduct and Directions of this Captain of our Salvation: he is the chief Shepherd and Bishop of our Souls, the great Apostle and High Priest of our Profession; and having in all things the pre-eminence, we are to submit ourselves to his Rule and Government. So that in all the Instances of Power and Authority, Christ is truly and properly stil'd *Our Lord*.

But by what Title is he invested in this Power? or by what Right does he thus become our Lord? Why,

1. As to his Divine Nature, he is our Lord by Right of Creation: for *all things were created by him, and for him*; and he likewise *upholdeth all things by the Word of his Power*; and therefore by a Divine uncontrollable Right is he Lord of All; for he that made them, hath certainly the best Right to govern them: *Hath not the Potter power over the Clay which he hath made and form'd?* saith the Apostle. How much better Right must God have over the Works of his own Hands?

2. Christ

2. Christ, as to his Humane Nature, is our Lord by a Right of Grant and Donation from the Father; for *all Power is given to him both in Heaven and Earth*, and all things are subjected under his Feet. God, for the greatness of his Person, and the merit of his Performances, hath confer'd on him the most supereminent degree of Dignity and Authority, making him not only Heir, but Lord of all things: *Let all the House of Israel know assuredly* (says St. Peter) *that God hath made him both Lord and Christ*, Acts 2. 36. Hence we find our Saviour declaring, *All things are deliver'd unto me by my Father*; and elsewhere, *The Father hath loved the Son, and hath given all things into his hand*.

3. Christ, as God and Man, is our Lord by Right of Purchase and Redemption; for he laid down a Price for us, and ransom'd us from Eternal Misery, and hath thereby acquir'd a just Right and Title to us. *We are not our own* (says the Apostle) *we are bought with a Price*; and that no mean Price neither, *not with such corruptible things as Silver and Gold, but with his own precious Blood, as of a Lamb without blemish and without spot*. Hence he is said to have purchased his Church with his own Blood, Acts 20. 28. Under the Law, he that bought another out of Bondage, acquir'd a Right to him, who thereby became his Servant for ever; how much more justly may our Saviour, who at the dearest rate redeem'd us from the vilest Bondage, claim our Service, and become our Lord?

4. Christ is our Lord by a farther Right of Conquest; for he hath (as the Apostle tells us) *subdu'd all things to himself*, and therefore is justly become the Lord of all; he hath vanquish'd all our Enemies, and deliver'd us out of their hands; he hath rescued us from the tyranny of Sin and Satan, and destroy'd the Power of those imperious Lords that ruled over us, *having spoil'd Principalities and Powers, he made a shew of them, and openly triumphed over them*: and therefore we rightfully fall under his subjection, as the Trophies of his Victory, and Accessions to his Conquest; insomuch that tho other Lords have ruled over us, yet now to us there is but one Lord.

Lastly, To all this we may add another Right, confirm'd by our own Consent and Agreement; for we have all given up our Names to Christ in our Baptism, and solemnly engag'd to be his faithful Soldiers and Servants to our lives end: We then renounc'd all other Masters, and solemnly took him to be our Lord and King; we have vowed perpetual Allegiance and Fealty to him, freely submitting to his Government, and promising entire subjection

and Obedience to him; so that he is become our Lord by our own voluntary Compact and Covenant: By which we see what a just Right and Title of Dominion our Saviour has over us, and how truly we are here taught to believe, and say, That Jesus Christ is our Lord.

But how does he exercise this Lordship and Dominion over his Church? This is the

Third thing propounded; in Answer to which, I say,

1. He does not exercise his Power as a Temporal Lord or Prince, with Worldly Pomp and Grandeur; for *his Kingdom is not of this World*: neither did he come to make any Show of earthly Power or Greatness in it. The Jews indeed vainly expected his *restoring again the Kingdom to Israel*: they look'd when he would subdue the Power of the *Romans*, and give them Victory over their Enemies, rescuing their Bodies from Captivity, and their Purses from Tribute; these are the gross Notions and Expectations they had from the Power of the Messiah. Whereas we are told,

2. That Christ's Power is wholly spiritual: *A Scepter of Righteousness is a Scepter of thy Kingdom*: He reigns not so much over the Bodies, as the Souls of Men; nor is his Power so much without, as within us: he rules in our Hearts by Faith, and by his Holy Spirit fits and prepares us for Glory: he came not to subdue our Temporal but Spiritual Enemies, to deliver us from the Power of Sin; by the Power of his Grace, to turn us from Darkness to Light, and from the Power of Satan unto God: he came to redeem us from the Curse of the Law, to pluck out the Sting of Death, and to rescue us from the Wrath to come: And to that end, made no Show of any worldly Greatness, but triumph'd over *Principalities and Powers, over the Rulers of the Darkness of this World, and over spiritual Wickednesses in high places*. These are the Acts of his Sovereignty, and are indeed the noblest Instances that can be given of the divine Power and Goodness. Moreover,

3. As our Lord he governs us with the greatest Clemency and Condescension; 'twas foretold of him, that *he should not cry, nor cause his Voice to be heard in the Streets; that he would not break the bruised Reed, nor quench the smoking Flax*: meaning, that he would allow for our Infirmities, and help them too; accordingly he reigns over us not with the Insolence and Cruelty of a

Tyrant, but with the Bowels of a gracious, tender and loving Father; he rules his People not *with a Rod of Iron*, but with a *Scepter of Righteousness*: which made himself declare, that his *Yoke is easy, and his Burden light*. Indeed,

For those that will not that he should reign over them, he brings them forth, and will slay them before him; he will bruise them with a *Rod of Iron*, and dash them in pieces like a *Potter's Vessel*. But for those that yield themselves to his Dominion, and become the faithful and loyal Subjects of his Kingdom, he governs them with all imaginable Meekness and Clemency, guiding them with his Grace and Counsel here, and after bringing them to Glory.

Thus I have briefly explain'd both the Nature and Manner of Christ's Kingdom, and in what sense he is so often in Scripture said to be our Lord.

As he is Man, he has this Power and Dominion confer'd upon him by the Father, as a Reward of his Sufferings; upon which account he was, after his Resurrection, said to be made *both Lord and Christ*.

As he is God, he has a natural independent Dominion, as the Maker, Preserver, and Proprietor of all things.

The former being a deriv'd dependent Right, imparted to him by way of Reward and Covenant, must cease at the Consummation of all things, when the end of it is accomplish'd. For being to *reign till he had put all his Enemies under his Feet*; when that is done by their Subjection to him, then is this Power to determine with the reason of it; which is thus express'd by the Apostle, *When he shall have put down all Rule, and all Authority and Power, then shall he deliver up the Kingdom to God, even the Father: And when all things shall be subdu'd unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him, that God may be all in all*, 1 Cor. 15. 24, 28.

The latter being an inherent Right of the Divine Nature, must be coeval with it, and continue for ever.

But let us see what Use we are to make hereof; And,

1. If Christ be our Lord, then we must be his Servants, and consequently pay him the Duty and Obedience that belongs to that Relation; *If I be a Master, where is my fear? saith the Lord of Hosts*, Mal. 1. 6. Hence we find our Saviour thus upbraiding such nominal Christians; *Why call you me Lord, Lord, and do not the things that I command you?* Luke 6. 46. As if it were an absurd Complement or Contradiction to give him that Title, and

deny him the Homage and Service that appertains to it; such do but flatter him with their Tongue, and draw nigh to him with their Lips, when their Hearts are from him, which will be rather found an Affront, than obtain Acceptance: for *Not every one that saith, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, but he that does the Will of my Father which is in Heaven,* Matth. 7. 21. Again,

2. If Christ be our Lord, then we are not the Lords and Masters of our selves; this the Apostle expressly tells us, *We are not our own, but are bought with a price:* and therefore we are not to live to our selves, but to him who has so dearly bought us; we are not to seek our own Glory, but the Honour of our Maker, and to *glorify him both in our Souls and Bodies, which are his.* 'Twas an arrogant Speech of his, who said, *Our Tongues are our own, who is Lord over us?* As if we might use them to Swearing, Cursing and Blaspheming at Pleasure: whereas our Tongues and all other Members are his, and therefore are not to be us'd to bad Purposes, but to be made Instruments of Holiness unto God.

3. If Christ be our Lord, then we must have no other Lords in Opposition to, or Competition with him: for our Saviour has told us, that *we cannot serve two Lords*, whose Commands clash and interfere, for the serving of one will be a disobeying of the other, *ye cannot serve God and Mammon*; he that will be a Friend to the World, does thereby become an Enemy of God, for we cannot addict our Hearts to the one, without withdrawing them from the other: If we are at the beck of our Lusts, we disclaim the Authority of God, for *he that does Sin is a Servant of Sin; and of whom a Man is overcome, of him he is brought in Bondage:* which is inconsistent with the Service we owe him as our Lord; for *his Servants we are to whom we obey, whether of Sin unto Death, or of Obedience to Righteousness,* Rom. 6. 16.

4. If Christ be our Lord, then we must not study to please Men by any base and sinful Compliances; for *if I thus please Men* (saith the Apostle) *I were not the Servant of Christ.* And therefore the same Apostle wills us to do our Service to him *with singleness of Heart, not with Eye-service as Men-pleasers, but as the Servants of Christ, doing the Will of God from the Soul, and performing it as to the Lord, and not unto Men: knowing that of the Lord you shall receive the Reward, for ye serve the Lord Christ,* Col. 3. 23, 24.

And

And as we are to yield this chearful and ready Obedience to him, so are we to take care that we do not inflave our Minds and Consciences to the imperious Dictates of false Teachers: 'twas our Saviour's own Caution; *Have not many Masters, for one is your Master in Heaven: and to us there is but one Lord* (saith the Apostle) and therefore *be not ye the Servants of Men.*

5. From Christ's being our Lord, we may learn the great Lessons of Charity, Humility, and Patience; for *the Disciple is not above his Lord, 'tis sufficient for him to be as his Lord.* We must be content with the same Usage from Men that he found in the World, and be so far from affecting Rule and Authority over others, that after his Example, we should be to them as he that serveth.

In a word, It is a great Comfort to the meanest, and a high Honour to the greatest Persons, to serve such a Lord, who is King of Kings, and Lord of Lords; which should teach both to do nothing unworthy of so high and noble a Relation; so shall we, who now do the Will, shortly enter into the Joy of our Lord.

DISCOURSE XI.

Matth. i. 20. latter part. *That which is conceived in her, is of the Holy Ghost.*

I Finish'd in my last the Explication of the second Article of the Creed, in which the second Person in the Trinity is consider'd chiefly as to his Divine Nature, in respect whereof he is principally stil'd Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, and our Lord. I proceed now to the

Third Article, which respects only his humane Nature, contain'd in these words, *Who was conceiv'd by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary.* Where we profess to believe two things of him, as he is Man, viz. His Conception, and his Nativity; the one ascrib'd to the Holy Ghost, and the other to the Virgin Mary. Of the

First I am now to treat from these words of the Evangelist, *That which is conceiv'd in her, is of the Holy Ghost.* Where we must observe,

First,

First, The Person said to be conceiv'd.

Secondly, The Act of Conception, both in the Prediction and Accomplishment.

Thirdly, The Author by whose Influence it was perform'd: to which we must add something touching the Manner and the Ends of this great Action. For the

First, The Person here said to be conceiv'd, it is, as appears by what went before, no other than the only Son of God; he that was begotten of the Father from all Eternity, and so of the same Substance with him, was in the fulness of Time made of a Woman, and conceiv'd of the Substance of his Mother; by which means the Saviour and Redeemer of the World had a Production agreeable to our human Nature, and became truly and really a Man. This is the great Mystery of the Incarnation, which was perform'd in the Person of the Son only; whereby *the Word was made Flesh, and dwelt among us, being sent in the likeness of sinful Flesh*: and tho he was in the Form of God, yet was found in Fashion as a Man, and took upon him the Form of a Servant. This is to be believ'd against a sort of Hereticks, who, because the Divine Nature, which is common to the Father and the Son, was conjoin'd with the Human, affirm'd the Father to be incarnate, as well as the Son: whereas we are here taught to believe, that he who was made Flesh was the Word; that the Incarnation was peculiar to the second Person; and that he who took upon him the Nature of Man was not the Father, or the Holy Ghost, but the Son only. From whence I proceed to consider,

Secondly, The Act of Conception, whereby the Son of God was fashion'd in the Womb; where *as Children are Partakers of Flesh and Blood, he likewise took part of the same*, Heb. 2. 14. 'Twas indeed foretold of the *Messias*, long before his coming, that he should be conceiv'd in the Womb of a Virgin; Isaiah 7. 14. *Behold, a Virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, &c. A Body hast thou prepar'd for me*, said the Psalmist in the Person of the *Messias*: meaning that Body, that was after by this miraculous Conception form'd and fitted for him. When the time for the fulfilling of this Prophecy drew nigh, the Angel *Gabriel* was dispatch'd to the Virgin *Mary*, to let her know, that she was highly

ly favour'd and blest among Women, for the Lord was with her and would be in her: when she cast in her Mind what kind of Salutation this was, the Angel deliver'd the Message, that she was singled out among Women to be the Mother of our Lord; for she should *conceive in her Womb, and bring forth a Son, and call his Name Jesus; he shall be great, and shall be call'd the Son of the Highest, and the Lord shall give unto him the Throne of his Father David,* Luke 1. 31, 32. When the Virgin *Mary* began to doubt the Truth of the Message, and to ask how these things could be; she was bid not to fear, for with God nothing is impossible, *ver. 37.* which things she found after accomplish'd to a tittle, and thankfully own'd the Performance of those things that were told her from the Lord, *ver. 45.* This is to be believ'd against another sort of Hereticks who denied our Saviour to be really and truly Man, and affirm'd him to be only a Ghost, Specter, or Apparition, that he had no substantial but only an aerial Body, in which he appear'd for a while, and then vanished away. This was begun by *Simon Magnus*, and follow'd by the *Gnosticks* and others, who labor'd to destroy the Credit of this Article, by giving out that Christ had only the outward Shape and Appearance, not the real Nature or Body of a Man.

Against these we are taught in our Creed, from the Testimony of Holy Scripture, to believe that he was conceiv'd of the very Substance of the Blessed Virgin, and of her receiv'd the same human Nature that is visible in other Men: He had a Body form'd in the Womb, and partaking of Flesh and Blood like other Children, in which he grew up by the same degrees, and was sustain'd by the same Nourishment with other Men; he exerted the same vital Actions, for he eat and drank with his Disciples, being hungry, weary, and sleepy as we are; he felt the same Pains as we do, and that in a very high and dolorous manner; his sacred Temples were pierc'd with Thorns, his Hands and Feet fasten'd to the Cross with Nails, his Side pierc'd with the Soldier's Spear: all which shew both the Tenderness of his Flesh, and the Reality of his Body. Beside which,

He had also a Soul endow'd with the same Faculties as we have, with an Understanding capable of Improvement, for *he grew up in Wisdom as well as Stature,* Luke 2. 52. with a Will patient and submissive; saying, *not my Will but thine be done,* Mat. 26. 39. with Affections and Passions like ours, for *his Soul was exceeding sorrowful even unto Death, being in all points tempted as we are, only without Sin,* Heb. 4. 15, In

In a word, as if our Saviour had foreseen this Objection, and design'd for ever to silence it, he appeal'd to the very Senses of his Disciples, bidding them to handle him and see him, for a Spirit had not Flesh and Bones as they saw him have. Thus did the eternal Son of God, who was God blessed for ever, truly become Man like us, and by this Conception really partake of our human Nature. As for the manner how these two Natures were united and subsist together, as it is above our finite Knowledg to comprehend, so ought it to be above our Curiosity to enquire; 'tis sufficient that Truth it self hath reveal'd this to us, and it becomes us to believe it, tho we know not the manner of it.

What the publick Reason and Wisdom of the Church hath defin'd to avoid the needless Disputes of Hereticks, viz. that these two Natures subsist without any Confusion or Mixture with each other, without any Conversion of one into the other, and without any Division or Separation from each other, we may safely submit our Faith to, and cease any farther Search or Curiosity; from whence I proceed,

Thirdly, To consider the Influence and Operation of the Holy Ghost in this Conception; and this the Scriptures tell us, was by a Divine overshadowing Power; for so the Angel told the Blessed Virgin, saying, *Behold the Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the Power of the most High shall overshadow thee; therefore also that Holy Thing that shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God*, Luke 1. 35. St. Matthew tells us, that tho *She was espous'd to Joseph, yet before they came together, she was found with Child of the Holy Ghost*, Mat. 1. 18. And therefore the Angel for his Satisfaction bid him, not to *fear to take unto him Mary his Wife, for that which was conceiv'd in her was of the Holy Ghost*. Where the ascribing this Action to the Holy Ghost, does

1. Exclude all Concurrence of Man; this occasion'd the Difficulty of the Virgin's Faith in this matter, who could not conceive how this could be without the Knowledg of Man, Luk. 1. 34. where she excludes the Concurrence of Man, or any carnal Act of Generation. Again,

2. This Supervention of the Holy Ghost implies, that the Act by which she conceiv'd was perform'd by the miraculous Efficacy of God's Holy Spirit; which shews this Divine Person, as to his human Nature, to have no other Father but God: for tho *Joseph* be sometimes nam'd as his reputed Father, yet 'tis expressly said, before

fore he knew his Wife, she was found with Child of the Holy Ghost.

As for the manner of that Operation by which this Conception was effected, 'twill behove us to be modest and content to be ignorant, without prying too far in what is not reveal'd.

Some indeed have ventur'd upon some Account of it, as that the Holy Ghost did bring a Body with him from Heaven, and convey'd it into the Blessed Virgin; others that our Saviour's Flesh was form'd of a Divine Seed from the Substance of God himself: but these have been condemn'd by the Fathers for bold and rash Conjectures, who therefore set bounds to our Curiosity, and will us not to be wise above that which is written; for *who can declare his Generation?* or describe such a Divine and ineffable Action, of which there is no other Example?

But what was the Concurrence of the Blessed Virgin in this Action? Why, The Holy Scriptures attribute all that to her which is given to other Mothers, with relation to the Fruit of their Womb; for she is said to conceive him of her very Substance, who is therefore stil'd the Fruit of her Womb, *Luk. 1. 42.* he was nourish'd and grew up in her, being form'd of her Blood and Substance; she is said to bear him in her Womb, to be big and to be with Child of him; and when the time was accomplish'd for her Delivery, she brought him forth too: for which reason she is truly stil'd the Mother of our Lord, and the antient Fathers and Councils call'd her *Θεοτόκος*, the Mother of God: so that all that is ascrib'd to any Mother in the Production of a Child is attributed to her, save the preceding Act of Generation, which was supply'd by the Divine Efficacy and overshadowing of the Holy Ghost.

But why was our blessed Saviour thus conceiv'd by the Holy Ghost? Why, for sundry, great, and weighty Reasons; as

1. To assure us of the Divinity of his Person, and that he was in a peculiar and eminent manner the Son of God. Had he been conceiv'd and born by the common way of Generation, we might have taken him for a mere Man like our selves, and so withheld the Divine Honours due to him; but being conceiv'd by a Divine Power, and born into the World without any earthly Father, we may safely conclude him come from Heaven, and receive him for the Son of God. Again,

2. None could be so fit to make this glorious Conjunction of the divine and human Nature in one Person as the holy Spirit of God: he it is to whom all other Miracles are ascrib'd, and

therefore was certainly the fittest Person to atchieve this the greatest of all Wonders. Moreover,

3. 'Twas the Office of the Holy Ghost to consecrate and set apart Persons for any great and noble Employment; hence we find the Anointing of Kings, Priests, and Prophets to their several Functions, appropriated to this holy Spirit; and we read of *Jeremy's*, *John the Baptist's*, and *St. Paul's* being sanctify'd and separated by the Holy Ghost from their Mother's Womb to their particular Offices: How much more requisite then was it that the Son of God, to whom all others refer, should be consecrated by this Divine Spirit to the highest and noblest of all Employments, even the Ransom and Salvation of Mankind? For which Reason he is said to be *anointed with the Oil of Gladness above his Fellows*.

Furthermore, 4. 'Twas necessary for our Saviour to be thus conceiv'd by the Holy Ghost, that he might be clear from all Stain and Pollution of Sin; for *such a High Priest* (saith the Apostle) *became us, who was holy, harmless, undefil'd, separate from Sinners, and made higher than the Heavens*: for else how could he have taken off the Stain and Impurity of our Nature, if himself had been defil'd with it? *The Lamb of God that taketh away the Sins of the World, was to be without Blemish and without Spot*; and he that would redeem Mankind, must himself not stand in need of his own Redemption. Now such a Saviour could not be conceiv'd by the ordinary Course of Nature, for *who can bring a clean Thing out of an unclean? that which is born of Flesh is Flesh*; and whoever descends from the Loins of our first Parents, that Fountain of Impurity, must unavoidably derive some Defilement thence. And therefore that the Redeemer of the World might be so made of a Woman, as not to contract the least blemish or tang of Impurity, most necessary it was that the ordinary way of Conception should be excluded, that the Holy Ghost, who is the Author and Fountain of all Holiness, should consecrate the Womb that bare him, and by a Divine overshadowing Power impregnate it with the Son of God.

From what has been said then on this Subject we learn,

1. The immaculate Conception of our blessed Saviour; this the Holy Scriptures have plainly reveal'd, and therefore it behoves us stedfastly to believe it: for tho he was made of a Woman, and so became like us in Similitude of Nature, yet this great Action was entirely perform'd by the Holy Ghost, whereby he

was totally exempted from the Pollution of sinful Flesh, together with all the Impurity and Imperfections that cleave to it. So that whatever original Corruption may be in us, we may rest assur'd there was none in him, in whom the Father declares himself well-pleas'd.

2. We may learn hence the infinite Goodness and Wisdom of God in this whole Transaction; his Goodness appear'd in promising and providing for us such an all-sufficient Saviour: his Wisdom in so contriving the matter, that *he who knew no Sin should be made Sin for us, that we might be made the Righteousness of God in him.* In this (saith the Apostle) the Kindness and Love of God towards Man appear'd, in that he sent his Son into the World; and in this his admirable Wisdom was seen, in *making him in the Likeness of sinful Flesh, to condemn Sin in the Flesh.*

3. From this great Contrivance we may learn to practise the greatest Purity and Holiness of Life; that as he who hath call'd and redeem'd us is holy, so we likewise should walk before him in all Holiness and Newness of Life. He came not to save us in, but from our Sins; and the same overshadowing Power that form'd his human Nature should reform ours: he was born for us at his Incarnation, and if ever we hope to receive any Benefit by it, he must be born within us too by Regeneration; that as he was conceiv'd without Spot, so we may be *presented at last without Spot or Wrinkle, or any such thing.*

Lastly, We learn hence the Fountain from whence all our Holiness and Happiness too must flow; namely, the Holy Spirit of God, for 'twas that which consecrated the human Nature of Christ, and 'tis that alone that can refine ours. We brought no such Purity into the World with us (as a Reverend Father hath observ'd) nor are we sanctify'd in the Womb; but as the Son of God was sanctify'd at his Conception, so are we at our Regeneration; and we are to be *born again, not of Blood, nor of the Will of the Flesh, nor of the Will of Man, but of God.* And being thus led by the Spirit of God in the ways of Grace and Holiness here, he will hereafter bring us to Glory.

DISCOURSE XII.

Luke 2. 6, 7. *While they were there, the Days were accomplish'd that she should be deliver'd; and she brought forth her First-born Son, &c.*

FROM the immaculate Conception of our Blessed Saviour by the Holy Ghost, the first Branch of the third Article; I proceed to the second, his Birth and Nativity of the Blessed Virgin, in those words, *Born of the Virgin Mary*, which is affirm'd here by the Evangelist; *When the Days were accomplish'd that she should be deliver'd, she brought forth her First-born Son.*

This is the next thing to be consider'd in this Mystery of the Incarnation, whereby the Son of God, who was begotten of the Father before all Worlds, was pleas'd in the Fulness of time to be born of a Woman; and as he was first form'd and fashion'd in the Womb without Sin, so was he after manifested in the Flesh to take away the Sins of the World. In treating therefore hereof I must,

First, Consider the Birth of our Saviour, both in the Prophecy, as 'tis recorded in the Old Testament, and in the Accomplishment, as 'tis related in the New.

Secondly, I must consider it with reference to the general Good of Mankind, and likewise to the particular Honour that was therein done to the Virgin *Mary*. And

Lastly, What Influence the Belief hereof ought to have upon our Practice. I begin with the

First, Which is to consider our Saviour's Birth as it was foretold of old, and fulfil'd in the latter Days: and here the first Promise made of him even in Paradise, stiles him *the Seed of a Woman*, Gen. 3. 15. signifying, that as the Ruin, so the Reparation of Mankind should come from that Sex: After this it was foretold, that this Woman, of whom the Messiah was to be born, should be of the *Seed of Abraham*, in whom all the Nations of the Earth should be blessed, Gen. 26. 4. In farther Process of time 'twas promis'd to *David*, that of the Fruit of his loins God would raise up Christ to sit

upon his Throne: for which reason he is stil'd, *The Rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch growing out of his Root.* Sometimes he is call'd, *a Horn of Salvation raised up in the House of his Servant David,* Luke 1. 32. all which shew that he was to descend of his Stock or Lineage. In the Prophecy of *Isaiah* 'tis expressly declar'd, that she who was to bear him into the World was to be a Virgin, *Isa. 7. 14. Behold, a Virgin shall conceive and bring forth a Son.* To the same purpose is that Prophecy of *Jerem.* chap. 31. 22. *The Lord hath created a new thing on the Earth, a Woman shall compass a Man;* meaning, that a Woman, without any Concurrence of a Male, should conceive and enclose in her Womb a Man; which he there calls a New thing, as having no Precedent before or since; and likewise a Creation, because 'tis above and beside the ordinary way of Generation.

These were the principal Prophecies of the Old Testament relating to the Birth of the Messias, and shew to us the manner of his Coming; which was not to be (as the Jews vainly expected) in Pomp and Magnificence, but in this low and mean Equipage; he was not promis'd to come directly from Heaven, attended with a numerous train of Angels, but his way was thro a Virgin's Womb, and to be conceiv'd and born as we are, Sin only excepted.

Now how exactly all these Circumstances concur'd, and were fulfil'd in our Saviour's Birth, the History of the New Testament may thorowly inform us. That he was *the Seed of a Woman,* according to the first Promise in Paradise, is evident from his being born of *Mary,* and conceiv'd of her very Substance; both the Evangelists and *St. Paul* relating, that *when the fulness of Time was come, God sent forth his Son made of a Woman,* Gal. 4. 4. The Promise made to *Abraham,* that *in his Seed all the Nations of the Earth should be Blessed,* was likewise fulfil'd in him; for both his Mother *Mary,* and *Joseph* her espous'd Husband, lineally descended from the Stock of *Abraham.* In him likewise was the Promise made to *David* accomplish'd, for both *Joseph* and *Mary,* by a natural and legal Extraction, proceeded from his Lineage, being (as *St. Luke* tells us) *of the House and Family of David,* Luke 2. 4.

Moreover, The Prophecy of a Virgin's conceiving, and bringing forth a Son, was literally fulfil'd in this Birth of our Saviour; for *Mary* his Mother was, both when she bare him, and when she brought him forth, a pure Virgin: that she was so when

and after she was espous'd to *Joseph*, appears by the stile of the Holy Scripture, which calls her a Virgin after the Espousal, *Luke* 1. 27. That she was so at the Angels saluting of her, appears by her own Words, *How shall this be, seeing I know not a Man?* That she continued so after her Conception, is evident by the Relation of *St. Matthew*, Ch. 1. 18. where her Conception is ascrib'd entirely to the Holy Ghost, without any Intervention of Man: And the same Evangelist applying to her the Prophecy of *Isaiah*, shews her to be a Virgin, not only when she conceiv'd, but when she brought forth; both being ascrib'd to a Virgin in the Prophecy, and both apply'd by the Evangelist as accomplish'd in her. And that she continu'd a Virgin ever after, hath been the general Belief of the Fathers and the Church ever since.

But why was it expedient that the Messiah should be thus born of a Woman, and of such a one too as was and ever continu'd a Virgin? Why, this was done not only for the fulfilling of Prophecies, but for divers other great and weighty Reasons. As,

1. 'Twas requisite that the Messiah should be born of a Woman, that he might be made Man, and become one of us, that so the same Nature that had offended might make Satisfaction: and as by one Man's Disobedience, many were made Sinners; so by the Obedience of one, many might be made Righteous, *Rom.* 5. 19. Again, this was done,

2. That by partaking of our Nature and the Infirmities of it, he might be the more gentle and compassionate towards us, bearing with our Infirmities, and more affectionately interceding for us: for so saith the Apostle, *it behoved him in all Things to be made like unto his Brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful High Priest*, *Heb.* 2. 17. Moreover,

3. 'Twas expedient that the Saviour of the World should be born of a Woman, that the means and method of Man's Restoration might have some relation to his Fall, and the same Sex that had unhappily occasion'd his Misery, might in some measure contribute to his Salvation; for as the Woman was first in the Transgression that brought Death and Ruin on Mankind, so most fit it was that she should not be the last or least in the Reparation.

And as it was thus requisite that the Redeemer of the World should descend from a Woman, so was it expedient likewise that he should be the Off-spring of a Virgin; for since the Word condescended so low as to be made Flesh, 'twas most fit he should

should receive his Birth from the purest Virgin, and be fashion'd in a Womb that was unpolluted: for if the Disciples thought it fit that his *dead Body should be laid in a Tomb or Sepulchre where never Man was laid before*, as we read *John 19. 41.* how much more decent was it, that his living Body should be conceiv'd in a Womb where no Man else had lain?

And for the same Reason it hath been believ'd that she continu'd in a state of Virginity ever after: For who can think it agreeable with the singular Piety of *Joseph*, after a divine Revelation that she was with Child by the Holy Ghost, to put her to any common Use; or that the Blessed Virgin her self should ever permit that pure Womb, which had been consecrated as a Temple of the Holy Ghost, and the Tabernacle of the Son of God, to be polluted by any fleshly Lusts?

In a word, he was born of a Woman, that he might be truly the Son of Man; and he was born of a Virgin, that he might eminently appear to be the Son of God. And this will lead me

Secondly, To consider the Nativity of Christ, both as a general Blessing vouchsaf'd to Mankind, and as a particular Favour and Honour done to the Virgin *Mary*. For the

1st. The Angels declar'd at his Nativity, that *his Birth was to be glad Tidings of great Joy unto all People*, *Luke 2. 11.* For he thereby took our Flesh to atone for our Sins; and by taking our Human, hath made us partakers of his Divine Nature: *He took not on him (saith the Apostle) the nature of Angels, but he took on him the Seed of Abraham, Heb. 2. 15.* He pass'd by the Angels that sinned, and suffer'd those glorious Creatures that left their first Habitation, *to be reserv'd in Chains of Darkness to the Judgment of the last Day*, *1 Pet.* Whereas he took pity upon the worthless Sons of *Adam*, and became himself the Son of Man, to make them the Sons of God; which should teach us upon a much higher Account than that of the Psalmist, to say, *Lord; what is Man that thou art mindful of him, or the Son of Man that thou thus visitest him?* For there he was made lower than the Angels, but here he is prefer'd above them, being crown'd with *Glory and Honour*.

And as this was a high Honour done to Mankind in general, for the Son of God to assume their Nature; so was it

2^{ly}. A signal and peculiar Honour done to the Virgin *Mary*, to receive it from her; to be singled out among all Women to be
the.

the Mother of our Lord, and to conceive him of her own Substance: This was an Honour above her wishes to desire; yea, above her Faith at first to believe, and above her Tongue at last to express; 'twas her own Prediction, *Behold, from henceforth all Generations shall call me Blessed.* The Angel began it at the Annunciation, *Blessed art thou among Women;* 'twas followed by her Cousin *Elizabeth* at her Conception, saying, *Blessed art thou among Women, and Blessed is the Fruit of thy Womb,* Luke 1. 42. And this hath been continued by the Catholick Church ever since, who with one voice have stil'd her the Blessed, and the ever-Blessed Virgin; and let that Mouth be cursed (saith a devout Father) that refuses to call her Blessed, and justly too, being so highly favour'd as to be the Mother of God, and the Parent of our Saviour.

And here two Extremes may be taken notice of; the one in the defect, by giving too little Honour to the Blessed Virgin; the other in the excess, by giving her too much.

The former is the fault of those who derogate from the just Honour which is due to her high Privilege, and will scarce allow any greater respect to her Name and Memory than is paid to other ordinary Women; whereas by this Birth she is nearly allied to Heaven, and exalted to the highest degree of Dignity, and consequently to be esteem'd more Honorable than the greatest Queen or Empress.

The latter is the fault of those that ascribe to her Divine Honors, and give her that Worship that is due to God only.

Both these Extremes are to be avoided, and the Language of the Catholick Church retain'd; which is, let her be Honored, and her Son Adored.

But what Influence should this Belief have upon our Minds and Conversations? Why,

1. This should teach us to admire the infinite Condescension of the Son of God for the good of Mankind: this is that great Mystery of Godliness, mention'd by St. Paul, *God was manifest in the Flesh.* A Mystery, as he styles it, without all Controversy great and incomprehensible, that God should vouchsafe to become Man, and he whom the Heaven of Heavens could not contain, should suffer himself to be circumscrib'd in the narrow Limits of a Virgin's Womb; that he who was older than all Time, should in the fulness of Time condescend to be born, and find a pas-

passage into the World, tho he made and had a Being long before the World had any; in a word, that the brightness of the Father's Glory should be shrouded under a mantle of human Flesh, and the express Image of his Person become like one of us; these are depths unfathomable, which the *Angels themselves desire to pry and look into*; yea such, at which the good Angels rejoice, and the evil tremble.

And as we are to admire the Greatness, so ought we to adore and celebrate the infinite Love and Goodness of God in this Transaction, crying out with the Apostle, *Oh the height and depth, and breadth and length of the Love of God, that passeth Knowledge!*

2. From Christ's condescending to take our Nature and Infirmities, we may learn the great Lesson of Humility and Condescension to one another; *Learn of me* (saith our Blessed Saviour) *for I am meek and lowly in Heart*: And indeed where can we better learn this excellent Lesson, than from this unparallel'd instance of Humility? Did the Son of God to advance us stoop from the highest pitch of Glory to the lowest depth of Misery; and shall vile sinful Man think it much to stoop to his Fellow-Creatures, and condescend a little for the good of one another? Where is our Christianity, if we thus take upon us? And why do we stile our selves the Followers of Christ, if we thus apparently leave the steps of his Example? The Apostle's Advice is, *Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, who being in the form of God, humbled himself to the nature of Man, and took on him the form of a Servant*: And having abas'd himself so low for our sakes, it must be very improper for us to exalt our selves.

3. Christ's being born of the Virgin *Mary*, and thereby assuming our Flesh, should raise us to the Consideration of the Dignity of our Nature, and make us scorn to debase it by any sordid and sensual Lusts. The Son of God, by dwelling in our Flesh, hath put a high and signal Honour upon it, greater indeed than the Angels themselves can boast of; for he took not on him the Nature of Angels, *but he took on him the Seed of Abraham*: and having thus exalted our Nature to be a Mansion for himself, let us not degrade or prostitute it to any vile Purposes. Shall I take the Members of Christ (saith the Apostle) and make them the Members of a Harlot? God forbid! let that be far from us. By this Birth of our Saviour we are allied to Heaven,

and become nearly united and related unto God; which should mind us of walking worthy of so high and noble a Relation, and to be Followers of God as dear Children: without this it had been better for us, not only that we our selves, but that he too had never been born. Christ therefore vouchsafing to become like us, let us endeavour to be like him; and having taken our Humanity, let us in some measure aspire to his Divinity.

Lastly, The Nativity of our Blessed Saviour should fill our Hearts with Joy, and our Mouths with the Praises of our Maker: The Birth of Princes and great Persons hath been ever celebrated with Joy and Festival Solemnity.

DISCOURSE XIII.

1 Pet. 3. 18. *For Christ also once suffer'd for Sins, the Just for the Unjust, that he might bring us unto God.*

HAVING seen the first step of our Saviour's Humiliation, to wit, his being incarnate of the Virgin *Mary*, the Subject of the third Article; I proceed

To the following steps and degrees of it, held forth in the next Article, in these words, *Suffer'd under Pontius Pilate, was Crucified, Dead and Buried, He descended into Hell.* Where we profess to believe,

1. His Sufferings in general, together with the Person under whom he underwent them; *Suffer'd under Pontius Pilate.*

2. The particular manner and degrees of his Sufferings, *Was Crucified, Dead and Buried, He descended into Hell:* All which must be distinctly consider'd. Accordingly,

I begin with his Sufferings in general, together with the Person under whom he suffer'd, in these words, *Suffer'd under Pontius Pilate.* Where we are to consider,

First, The Person that is here said to suffer, and that was Christ.

Secondly, The Person under whom he is said to suffer, *Pontius Pilate.*

Thirdly, What it was that he suffer'd. And

Fourthly,

Fourthly, The end or design of his Sufferings, together with their sufficiency to that End; all which are set forth to us in these words of St. Peter, *Christ once suffer'd for Sins, the Just for the Unjust, that he might bring us unto God.*

First, For the Person here said to suffer, our Text tells us 'twas Christ: *Christ once suffer'd*, &c. And our Creed, that 'twas the second Person in the Holy Trinity, who was Christ the Lord, as appears by the Connexion of this with the former Article, where he that was conceiv'd and born of the Virgin Mary, is said to suffer under *Pontius Pilate*. This is to be believ'd against a sort of Hereticks call'd the *Patricians*; who because the Godhead in Christ was united to the Mankind, affirm'd that the Godhead suffer'd with it, and consequently not the Son only, but God the Father suffer'd in and with him: in opposition to this, we are taught to believe the Godhead to be impassible, and that the human Nature of Christ was alone capable of Suffering, and consequently the Person that underwent it was the Man Christ Jesus.

Secondly, The Person under whom he suffer'd, our Creed tells us was *Pontius Pilate*, the President and Governour of *Judea* under *Tiberius* the Emperor; a Person of a cruel, rough and untractable Temper, as appears by his merciless usage of the *Galileans*, when they came to the Temple to worship; *Whose Blood he mingled with their Sacrifice*, Luke 13. 1. and more especially by his barbarous dealing with our Saviour, whom he sentenc'd to Death, when he knew him to be Innocent; for 'tis said, *that he knew that for Envy they had deliver'd him*: he declar'd him to be a just Person, and upon Examination *found no Fault in him*; and his Wife, admonish'd in a Dream, will'd him to *have nothing to do with the Blood of that just Man*: yet when he saw a Tumult was made, to content the People, he yielded him up, and against the Sentence of his own Conscience condemn'd him to be crucified.

But why is the Person under whom he suffer'd so particularly mention'd in the Creed? This was done for weighty Reasons. As,

1. To signify the time when this great and memorable Action was done; for the antient Custom of the World was to make their Computations by their Governors, and to refer all Historical Relations to the respective times of their Government;

and therefore that we might the better satisfy our selves of the Truth of our Saviour's Passion, the particular Governor is mention'd by and under whom it was perform'd.

2. This is here taken notice of, to let us know the manner how this great Affair came to pass; for tho the Jews, being at that time in subjection to the Romans, had no Power to put any Man to Death, yet their Malice against our Saviour led them on to deliver him to *Pilate*, whom by the violence of their Accusations and Tumult they drew on to pass Sentence upon him, as we find it related at large by the four Evangelists. And this will lead me

In the next place to consider the Truth and Certainty of Christ's Sufferings, or the Foundation on which our Beliefs of them is grounded. And that is

Partly on the Predictions of the Old Testament concerning the Messias. And

Partly on the Accomplishment of them in the New, in the Person of our Saviour. For the

1. It was plainly reveal'd to the Prophets of Old, and by them declar'd long beforehand, that the Messias should suffer. All the Sacrifices under the Law, where every thing was purg'd with Blood, and without shedding of Blood was no Remission, were but Types and Representations of his Sufferings: The Psalmist foretold of the *Kings of the Earth, and the Rulers taking Counsel against the Lord, and against his Anointed*, Psal. 2. which we shall find verified both in the Roman and Jewish Rulers. The Prophet *Isaiah* gave such a lively Representation of the Sufferings of the Messias, as if he had seen the Tragedy acted in his Days; his fifty third Chapter seeming rather a History of something past, than a Prediction of what was to come: in the third verse he is said to be *despis'd and rejected of Men, a Man of Sorrows and acquainted with Grief; we hid (saith he) our Faces from him, he was despis'd, and we esteem'd him not*. In the following verses he tells us of his being *oppressed, afflicted*, and at last *cut off out of the Land of the Living*; giving a particular Description of the several Acts and Parts of this Tragedy, of which we shall speak hereafter. In the mean time,

We see how justly our Saviour refer'd the disbelieving Jews to the Law and the Prophets, shewing from thence how in it was written, that the Son of Man should suffer many Things, and that the Spirit that was in the Prophets testified beforehand the Sufferings of Christ, 1 Pet. 1. 11. But,

2. What

2. What was thus clearly foretold of the Messiah, in the fulness of Time, was evidently fulfil'd in the Person of our Saviour, and in him, and him only all the Passages of those predicted Sufferings were punctually accomplish'd. The Jews that were the Instruments, were likewise the Witnesses of his Passion; and the Gentiles too, who had a hand in his Blood, bore Testimony to it; the Truth whereof, not only the Evangelists in the Gospel, but the *Roman Historians* in their Annals have recorded.

But, *Thirdly*, What was it that Christ suffer'd? Why, that was so exquisitely great and heavy, that as none but the Son of God was able to indure, so none but the Spirit of God was able to express it.

The Account which the Holy Scriptures give of it, relate to both the Parts of his Humanity, *viz.* his Body and his Soul, in both which he felt the most cruel and unexpressible Tortures.

As for his Body, we find his Head goar'd with Thorns, his Back torn with Scourges, his Hands and Feet stretch'd out and nail'd to a Cross, yea, his whole Body, in the most tender and sensible Parts, bruised and wounded; in which painful and dolorous Posture he continu'd for the space of six Hours, the People all the while mocking, buffeting and upbraiding of him; the Multitude, instead of pitying, spit in his Face, making his Misery the Object of their Derision, adding the bitterest Taunts to the sharpest Tortures: and we may easily imagine what acerbity and acuteness of Pain he must needs indure from so much violence and mockery.

But the Sufferings of his Soul were far sharper than those of his Body, the Horrors of the one much exceeding the Anguish of the other; for *his Soul was troubled*, says St. John, *very heavy*; says St. Matthew, *fore amaz'd*; says St. Mark, *yea, exceeding sorrowful even unto death*, and in such an Agony, as *made him sweat great drops of Blood*. He groan'd under the heavy Burden of the Divine Wrath, and conflicted with all the Powers of Darkeness, under which he was so overborn with the Burden, that *he needed an Angel to be sent to strengthen him*. He was forsaken of his Friends, and in his apprehension of God too, which made him cry out in the bitterness of his Soul, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* He prayed three times that the bitter Cup might pass from him, which yet he drank off to the very Dregs. In a word, he suffer'd the extremity of what Humane Nature could bear, and in that degree too, that nothing but the Divine Nature

Nature with which it was conjoin'd, was able to support him under it.

But for what did he suffer all this? Why, that our Text tells us was for Sins, *for Christ also once suffer'd for Sins*: Indeed Sin is the sole Cause of all Suffering, for *as by one Man Sin enter'd into the World, and Death by Sin, even so Death passed upon all Men, for that all have sinned*: And elsewhere, *Death is the Wages of Sin*, Rom. 6. *last*. But still how came Christ to suffer for Sin, who was wholly free from it? for *he did no sin, neither was any guile found in his Mouth*; being wholly harmless, undefiled, separate from Sinners, and made higher than the Heavens, 1 Pet. 2. 22.

Why, 'twas not for any Sins of his own that he underwent these Sufferings; for *tho he were tempted in all Points like as we are, yet was he without Sin*, Heb. 4. 15. but for the Sins of Mankind, which as their Surety he had taken upon him: *We all like Sheep had gone astray* (says the Prophet) *and God hath laid on him the Iniquities of us all*, Isa. 53. 5, 6. *He was wounded for our Transgressions, and bruised for our Iniquities; the chastisement of our Peace was upon him, and by his Stripes we are healed. He died for our Sins* (says the Apostle) *and gave his Life a Ransom for many*. So that as our Text tells, *The Just suffered for the Unjust; and he who knew no Sin was made Sin for us, that we might be made the Righteousness of God in him*.

But how was it consistent with the Justice of God to punish the Innocent for the Guilty, and to make his Son suffer for the Faults of others? Why this indeed, without his own voluntary Choice and Consent, had been an Act of great Injustice; for Justice requires, that *the Soul that sinneth should die*, and exacts the Punishment from the offending Party: but as he that willingly becomes a Surety for another's Debt, may be justly made to pay it, so he that voluntarily takes upon him the Guilt of others, may justly undergo the Punishment due to it. Accordingly therefore the Son of God, by taking upon him the Sins of Mankind, became liable to suffer for them; and having undertaken as their Surety to pay their Debts, he became obnoxious to Divine Justice, which might exact from him the utmost Farthing.

But might not our Saviour have avoided those Sufferings? Yes, he could have commanded *Legions of Angels* to his rescue, Mat. 26. 53. *I have Power* (says he) *to lay down my Life and to take it up again; no Man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of my self*, John

10. 18. 'Twas his own voluntary Act, to which nothing but our great Misery and his own great Mercy and Goodness could incline him.

Beside, this was a Matter that was agreed upon and concerted between him and his heavenly Father, whereby it was determin'd what should be the Manner and Measure of his Sufferings; for which reason he is said to be *the Lamb fore-ordain'd to be slain before the Foundation of the World*, 1 Pet. i. 19, 20.

But, *Fourthly*, why did he suffer all this? Why, that the last words of our Text will inform us, *that he might bring us unto God*. He came from God to bring us to him; we had all gone astray, and by evil Works became Enemies and Strangers to him, our Natures were alienated from him by the first Transgression, and by the repeated Errors of our Lives we were at a greater distance from him. Now Christ, by making Satisfaction for our Sins, hath remov'd this Enmity, and reconcil'd us again unto God, in so much that *we who were afar off, are brought nigh by the Blood of his Cross*. This was the great End and Design of his Sufferings to do away Sin, the only Makebate between God and us, and thereby to make our Peace, and restore us again to the lost Love and Favour of Heaven, which by our Transgressions we had justly forfeited.

And this he did by once offering up himself as a Sacrifice for us, for so our Text farther tells us, *Christ also once suffer'd for us, the Just for the Unjust, &c.* The Sacrifices under the Law, by reason of their Imperfection, were frequently repeated: for being only *Shadows of good things to come, they could not make the Comers thereunto perfect*; neither could the *Blood of Bulls and of Goats of themselves take away Sin*: and therefore in those Sacrifices there was a remembrance again made of Sins every Year. But Christ, by one Oblation of himself once offer'd, made a full, perfect and intire Sacrifice and Satisfaction for the Sins of the whole World, the infinite Dignity of his Person putting an Alsufficient Merit and Value into his Atonement: And tho God Almighty, if he had thought fit, might, out of his absolute Sovereignty, have pardon'd Sinners upon the sole Condition of their Repentance; yet his infinite Wisdom rather chose this way, to vindicate the Honour of his Laws, and to dispense his pardoning Mercy in such a manner as should give no encouragement to Sin, nor make the least reflection on his infinite Justice, Truth and Holiness.

In a word, He was deliver'd for our Offences, that we might be deliver'd from the Power and Guilt of them; and suffer'd once for Sins, to free us from the Eternal Sufferings due to them.

But what may we learn from Christ's Sufferings? Why,

1. We learn from hence the Verity of his Humane Nature; for he sustain'd those Miseries which none but Man could suffer, and in that degree too, that none but God could bear: and by both we are assur'd of the Certainty and Efficacy of his Redemption. His Divine Nature was impassible, and we cannot doubt the Truth of his Humane Nature, when we find him subject to our Infirmities.

2. From Christ's Sufferings we learn the heinous and provoking Nature of Sin, which requir'd the Blood of the Son of God for its Expiation: And God's hatred and grievous displeasure against it herein plainly appears, in that he would not hear of, or grant any Mercy or Pardon without such a valuable Consideration. And sure that can be no cheap or light Matter, that cost our Saviour so dear to do it away.

3. From Christ's Sufferings we may assure our selves of his Tendernefs and Compassion towards us. Nothing gives us a quicker sense of any Evil than our own undergoing of it; and we are naturally dispos'd to pity and compassionate any Misery in another, which we have felt and groan'd under our selves; for thereby we know what it is, and that makes us apt to be affected towards them that labour under it, as we should be. This the Apostle tells us was one End of Christ's Sufferings, that he might be a *merciful High Priest*; he subjected himself to Misery, that he might be dispos'd to shew us Mercy: Which made the same Apostle say, *We have not an High Priest that was not touch'd with the feeling of our Infirmities, but one that was in all Points tempted and tried as we are*, that by the sense of his own Sufferings he might the more compassionate ours.

4. The consideration of Christ's Sufferings should inflame our Heart with ardent Love towards him, who underwent those great Miseries for our sake: *For your sake* (says the Apostle) *he became poor, that you thro his Poverty might be made rich*. He emptied himself of all, that we might be filled; and was content to undergo the greatest Sufferings, that we might escape them: And how can we do less than intirely love so dear a Friend?

5. From Christ's Sufferings we may learn to put our whole Trust and Affiance in him: For *if God spared not his own Son, but*

*

deliver'd

deliver'd him up for us, how shall he not with him freely give us all things? And if Christ spared not his own Life, but gave himself for us, how can we fear his with-holding any good thing from us?

6. Christ's Sufferings may teach us Patience and Resignation to the Will of God in all that befalls us. If he hath sustain'd the heavy burden of God's Wrath for us, shall we droop and flag under a few light and gentle Afflictions? Shall we grudge but to sip of that bitter Cup which he drank off to the very Dregs? And when he hath born the heat and trouble of the Day, shall we be impatient under the darkness and uneasiness of the Night?

Lastly, Our Saviour's Sufferings in our stead should engage us to all possible ways and acts of Gratitude, devoting our selves intirely to him who died for us, and often saying with the Psalmist, *What shall we return to the Lord for all his Benefits?*

DISCOURSE XIV.

Mark 15. 15. *So Pilate willing to content the People, released Barrabbas to them; and deliver'd Jesus, when he had scourged him, to be crucified.*

HAVING spoken of Christ's Passion in general, and seen something of the Nature, Manner and End of his Sufferings, I proceed to the particular Steps and Degrees of them. The

First whereof is his Crucifixion, *He was crucified*; of which I shall now treat from these words of the Evangelist, *Pilate willing to content the People, deliver'd him up to be crucified, &c.* where we have,

1. The Person under whom our Saviour suffer'd, which was *Pontius Pilate*, who is here said to deliver him up; of which before.

2. The Motive that induc'd him to deliver him up, which was *to content the People*: And here it may be ask'd,

How came *Pilate* so fearful and tender of offending the People as to be willing to yield up Jesus, and to pass Sentence upon him, against his Conscience, to please them? Why, the Reason was,

F f

He

He had incens'd the People by his former Violences, and made himself liable to be articl'd against for many Misdemeanors: particularly, they threatned to accuse him to his jealous Governor *Tiberius*, as no Friend to him, for letting Christ go, which they said was to be *no Friend to Caesar*; and therefore to quiet them, he did as they would have him, and this abject Fear betray'd him into this unjust and vile Action. However, this did not serve his turn, for *Josephus* tells us, that he was soon after upon the Complaint of the *Samaritan* Jews remov'd, *Antiq. lib. 18. 5.*

But the main thing which both our Text and our Creed here will us to consider, is the Punishment to which Christ was deliver'd up, and that is after *scourging to be crucify'd*. Where,

First, I must shew the Nature and Manner of Crucifixion.

Secondly, That 'twas foretold by the Prophets in the Old Testament, that the Messias was to be crucify'd.

Thirdly, That our Saviour underwent the Extremity of this Punishment according to those Predictions. For the

First, Crucifixion, in the days of the Apostles, was a frequent and known Punishment; but since that, the long disuse of it hath made it not so easy to be understood. The Account we have of it, both from History and Figure, shews it to be the affixing of Criminals to a Cross, which was made of a strait erect piece of Wood, with a transverse piece over it near the Top: the Person that suffer'd on it had his Body apply'd to the erect Piece of it, fasten'd below with Nails to the Feet; above, the Arms stretched out and nail'd by the Hands to the transverse Beam, as we find it represented in the Figure of a Crucifix. 'Twas a *Roman* Punishment inflicted only on Servants and Slaves, call'd therefore by *Tacitus*, *servile supplicium*, never executed on any Freeman or Citizen, unless it were for very hainous and flagitious Crimes, such as Treason, Robbery, Sedition, or the like: 'Twas a cruel and an accursed way of dying; for the Body being fasten'd to the Cross by the most tender and sensible Parts, it was attended with the most exquisite Pains, and yet being no vital Parts, they were a long time a dying, and expos'd all the while to the Scoffs and Mockery of Spectators: Upon which account it is written, *Cursed is every one that hangeth on a Tree*. This was the common Punishment of the most infamous and vilest sort of Wretches, till

Constantine

Constantine the first Christian Emperor, out of a pious Honour and Respect to our Saviour who suffer'd this way, forbad any farther Use of it. But for the better understanding of this Punishment, we may note many Circumstances added by the *Romans* to increase the Shame and Sting of it: As,

1. They that were to undergo it were first to be scourg'd; so *St. Jerom* tells us, 'tis requir'd by the Laws of the *Romans*, that the Person to be crucified be first whip'd: Accordingly *Pilate's* Sentence was, *when he had scourg'd him, to lead him away to be crucified.* To which end,

2. They that were to be crucified were to be strip'd of their Clothes, and to suffer naked; that being severely lash'd in several Parts, and after expos'd to the open Air, they might feel the greater Shame and Pain.

3. The Persons to be crucified were to bear their Cross on their Shoulders to the Place of Execution, which was ever without the City: So *Plutarch* tells us, that Malefactors going to Execution, each one bears his own Cross. This was added to increase the Ignominy and Reproach of this Punishment, by making them to carry the Instrument of their own Shame, and to bear that which was after to bear them.

4. They who were fasten'd to the Cross had the Cause of their Punishment written over them in Capital Letters, that so the Equity of it might the better appear to the World: Hence *Dio* tells us of a Servant hanging on the Cross, with Letters declaring the Cause of his Punishment. This is a brief Account of the Nature and Manner of Crucifixion; from whence I must go on,

Secondly, To shew that 'twas foretold by the Prophets, that the promised *Messias* was to suffer this way, and to undergo Crucifixion. And this will be evident by many Types and Prophecies of the Old Testament. *Abraham's* Readiness to sacrifice his Son *Isaac*, and *Isaac's* yielding himself up to be made a Sacrifice, represents both the Readiness of God the Father to offer up his Son, and the Willingness of the Son to be offer'd up for us; and *Isaac's* bearing the Wood for the Sacrifice, represented *Christ's* bearing his Cross, which was a Circumstance peculiar to that way of Suffering, and was a clear Type or Token of Crucifixion. *Moses's* lifting up the brazen Serpent on a Pole in the Wilderness, and the People's being cur'd and preserv'd from the mortal Bitings of other Serpents by the sight of it, was a plain Representation of the *Messias's* lifting up on the Cross, and the Salvation wrought

by it from the Power and Malice of the old Serpent.

And as this was represented in Types, so was it more clearly foretold in Prophecies; *David* prophetically spake in the Person of the *Messias*, *They pierced my Hands and my Feet*, Psal. 22. 17. And *Zachary*, *They shall look upon him whom they have pierc'd*, Zach. 12. 10. Both which Places are generally expounded of the Sufferings of the *Messias*, and manifestly refer to his Crucifixion. The Prophet *Isaiah* speaks of him as one *wounded for our Transgressions, and bruised for our Iniquities, the Chastisement of our Peace was upon him, and by his Stripes we are healed*, Isa. 53. 5. with many other Circumstances of his Passion: all which evidently relate to the Wounds and Bruises, the Scourge and Lashes receiv'd at his Crucifixion. Thus was the particular way and manner of his Sufferings clearly reveal'd to the Prophets long before it came to pass. Whence I proceed,

Thirdly, To shew that our Blessed Saviour underwent the utmost Extremity of that Punishment, according to those Predictions; for he was nail'd to the Cross after the manner of other Malefactors, where he hung for the space of six hours upon the tender Wounds of his Hands and Feet; during which time he not only felt the acutest Pains, but endur'd the bitterest Taunts, Scoffs and Revilings of the People; they reproached him with all his former Miracles, willing him to come down from the Cross, when they had fasten'd him to it, and wagging their Heads at him, said, *He sav'd others, himself he cannot save*. He was mock'd, buffeted and spit upon, and crucified between two Thieves, as if he had been the Arch-malefactor, being, as 'twas foretold of him, *numbered with the Transgressors*, and us'd more roughly and contemptuously than the worst of them.

All the preliminary and additional Acts of Shame and Cruelty, us'd in such Cases, were exercis'd on him with the greatest Barbarity. For,

1. He was severely scourg'd before they led him to be crucified, their cruel Lashes fetching Blood and making long Furrows on his Back, the Smart whereof was increas'd by that reproachful Taunt us'd at every Blow, *Now prophesy who it is that strikes thee*. After which they expos'd his raw and tender Flesh to the scorching of the Sun, and the rigor of the Air and Winds. Again,

2. He was strip'd of his Clothes, and according to the manner of that Punishment suffer'd naked; they divested him of those poor Coverings that were ordain'd to hide our Shame, *parting his Garments*

ments among them, and casting Lots for his Vesture, as we read Mat. 27. Moreover,

3. He was made to bear his Cross upon his own Shoulders, till growing weary, and almost sinking under the Burden, *they compelled Simon the Cyrenian to bear it for him.*

Lastly, He had, according to the Custom in this Punishment, his Accusation written in Capital Letters over his Head ; **THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS**, *Mat. 27. 37.* which that it might be the more generally known and read by all, *St. Luke* tells us, was written in three Languages, *viz.* in Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, *Luke 23. 38.*

Thus did the malicious Jews improve this Roman Punishment to the height of Cruelty upon the Person of our Saviour, who thereby endur'd the utmost Rigor of Crucifixion ; of the Truth whereof we may be abundantly assur'd, not only from the Satisfaction given to *St. Thomas*, who *saw in his Hands the very print of the Nails, and thrust his Finger into his Side*, where the Soldier's Spear had pierced, but likewise from the Testimony of the Jews who executed this Cruelty upon him, and the History of the *Romans*, who in their Annals have recorded it. But,

How came the glorious and guiltless Son of God to submit to so vile and infamous a Punishment ? Why, As Sin was the Cause, so the Expiation of it was the End of his Sufferings ; he had undertaken for Man's Redemption, and to rescue them from those eternal Punishments which their Disobedience had incur'd. Now none but the Son of God could effect this, and nothing but his precious Blood could prove a valuable Consideration.

Indeed the whole Scene of his Sufferings was occasion'd by our Sins ; these were the Nails that fasten'd him to the Cross, and the Spear that pierced his sacred Side.

And the whole Design of them was to remove their Guilt, and so restore us to the Favour of God : He wore a Crown of Thorns, that we might wear a Crown of Gold ; and that which pierc'd and wounded his Head, serves to defend and adorn ours : That Scarlet Robe which the Jews put on him, dy'd as it were in his own Blood, helps to hide our Shame, and to cover for us a Multitude of Sins ; his bitter Cup is our most reviving Cordial ; the Vinegar and Gall which made him faint, is our Nectar, and a glorious Potion of Immortality ; his Cross, the cursed Instrument of his Death, is to us a Tree of Life, which bears the Fruit of Knowledg and eternal Happiness ; his Agonies are our Triumphs, and his bloody
Sweat

Sweat the most Sovereign Balsam to cure our Wounds. In a word, he liv'd and dy'd with Thieves and Robbers, and was number'd among Transgressors, only that we might live with Saints, and sing forth his Praises with Myriads of Angels.

Thus did every part of this Tragedy relate entirely to our Benefit and Advancement: All which instruct us in many excellent Lessons. As,

1. Christ's being lifted up on the Cross for us, betokens the Ardency of his Affection towards us, whose Arms are there open and stretch'd out ready to receive and embrace us; his Hands spread out as it were to woo and call us to him, that he may lead us unto our heavenly Father, and be reconcil'd to him: which Postures represent that great and large Charity he bears in his Heart to Mankind.

2. From our Saviour's Crucifixion we may learn to crucify the Flesh, with the Affections and Lusts; this is the Use the Apostle would have us make of it: As Christ was crucify'd for us, so should we be crucify'd to the World, and the World to us. And what can be more reasonable, than that we should mortify and forsake that which cost our Saviour so dear to do it away? If any can be so dangerously mistaken, as to think Sin but a slight Matter, let him enter into the High-Priest's Palace, the Judgment-Hall, and Mount *Calvary*, and there see what it drew upon a bleeding and crucify'd Saviour; let him take a Walk in the Garden of *Gethsemane*, and behold there what he endur'd for its Expiation; there mayst thou see what a dismal Night of Affliction thou hast made him to suffer by thy Luxury and Night-Revelings, and how he groan'd under that at which thou dost but sport thy self; call upon thy deep Draughts and riotous Excesses, to see what a Cup of Wrath and Trembling they have made him to drink to the very Dregs; shew thy leud Embraces a naked Christ bath'd all over in Tears and Blood to wash off their Impurities; bid thy Oaths and Cursings look yonder, and see the Blood and Wounds they have so often play'd withal; view the bitter Pangs, Throws, and Agonies that Sin made him to labour under: and then tell me, whether it be so light a matter as too many would persuade themselves it is.

And having thus wrought thy self into some sense of the Evil and Danger of Sin; learn in the

Next place to hate and abhor it, be sorry for what is past, and seek to repent and turn from it for the time to come. Can

we

we think it much to shed a few penitential Tears, for that which made him sweat great Drops of Blood? And when he has suffer'd so much for us already, shall we tear open his Wounds afresh, and act over the Tragedy upon him again? Why, the Apostle tells us, that to continue in our Sins, is *to crucify afresh the Son of God, and to put him again to open shame*; so that to persist in our evil Ways, is to delight in our Saviour's Blood, and to hug the Cause of his Crucifixion. When therefore Satan or thy own corrupt Heart tempt thee to the Commission of any, imagine that thou sawest thy crucifi'd Saviour coming towards thee, shewing thee his Cross, and beseeching thee not to pierce his Side again, or drive any more Nails into him; yea fancy all his Wounds to be so many Mouths gaping for Pity, and begging thee not to renew their Smart by any fresh Acts of Cruelty: and this one would think should be sufficient to dissuade any, that had but the Bowels of a Man, from such unreasonable Attempts.

4. Our Saviour's Cross may teach us the great Lessons of Patience, Humility, and doing good to one another; for he bore the sharpest Pains with the greatest Patience; and *as the Sheep before the Shearer is dumb, so he open'd not his Mouth*. He did not indeed pretend to a stoical Apathy or Insensibleness of Pain, nor court Racks and Gibbets with *quam suave quam dulce*, how sweet and pleasant are these things? No, he felt the sharpness both of the Spear and Nails, and was so sensible of the bitterness of his Cup, that *he pray'd three times most earnestly that it might pass from him*; yet when his Father's Will, and his own Choice, had made it his Lot, he was content to take it off, and bore the bitterness of it with an invincible Patience: and therefore the Apostle wills us, to *look to the Author and Finisher of our Faith who was crucify'd for us, lest we grow weary and faint in our Minds*, Heb. 12. 2.

Lastly, Let us not be either afraid or asham'd to own a crucifi'd Saviour, but rather put our whole Trust and Affiance in him: the Apostles and the primitive Christians were so far from being asham'd, that they glory'd in the Cross, and prefer'd it above all the Glories and Triumphs of the World. *I am not asham'd* (saith St. Paul) *of the Cross of Christ, by which the World is crucify'd to me, and I unto the World*: yea, God forbid (saith he in another Place) *that I should glory in any thing save in the Cross of Christ, which is the Power of God unto Salvation*. He told the Corinthians, that *He desir'd to know nothing among them but Jesus Christ*.

Christ, and him crucify'd: and the Philippians, that he counted all other Knowledge but as Loss and Dung in comparison of the Excellency of this Knowledge of Christ. He endur'd the Cross, and despis'd the Shame for our Salvation; and certainly it must be very unworthy and unsafe too for us to be asham'd to own and adhere to him, especially having told us, That they who are asham'd of him, of them he will be asham'd at the last Day.

DISCOURSE XV:

1 Cor. 15. 3. *latter part. Christ died for our Sins according to the Scriptures.*

FROM the first Step of our Saviour's Passion, *viz.* his Crucifixion, I pass to the

Second, Which is his Death; *Was crucify'd, dead, &c.* where we must note, that Crucifixion of it self does not necessarily include Death; for the Persons that suffer'd this way being fasten'd to the Cross, not by any vital part, which might soon dispatch them, but by the Hands and Feet, were so long a dying, that being taken down in some time they might be easily suppos'd to live: but our Saviour's Sufferings did not end so, but proceeded to the very Extremity of this Punishment, and fulfil'd the utmost Design of Crucifixion, which terminated in Death; so the Apostle tells us, *Christ died for our Sins according to the Scriptures.* In treating of which, I must shew,

First, That Christ underwent a true and proper Death.

Secondly, That his Death was for our Sins.

Thirdly, That this was done according to the Scriptures, that is, according to the Account of it in the Predictions of the Old Testament.

First, I say, Our Saviour underwent a true and proper Death. For the clearing of which, we must observe, that as Life properly consists in the Union of Soul and Body, and those vital Operations that flow from it; even so Death truly consists in the Dissolution of that Union, and the Separation of the two great Parts, the Body and the Soul, from each other; by which
all

all vital Actions cease, and the Body becomes but a lumpish and lifeless Carcase. Now such was the Death which the Son of God underwent: for as he was truly a Man consisting of Body and Soul as we are, and as he was a living Man, in whom those two parts were vitally united, by which he felt the same Motion and Sensation, and had the same Passions and Infirmities that we have; so was he a mortal Man too as we are, and had his Soul really separated from his Body, which was thereby depriv'd of all vital Influence from it, even as it happens to us on our Dissolution.

This is in Scripture sometimes expressed by *cutting off from the Land of the Living, and going down into the Pit*; sometimes by *resting and sleeping in the Dust*, sometimes by being *gather'd to our Fathers, and making our Bed in darkness*; sometimes by *departing, and giving up the Ghost*: all which Expressions signify not a feigned or metaphorical, but a real and proper Death, and being apply'd to our Blessed Saviour, shew that he truly and properly died.

For the certainty of his Death, not only the sacred Writings, but the Roman History will fully inform us. The very Actors in this Tragedy were the Witnesses of it, and they who wickedly put to Death the Lord of Life were not asham'd to own and publish it: The *Scribes* and *Pharisees* that thirsted for his Blood, the Multitude that extorted his Death, *Herod* and *Pontius Pilate* that deliver'd him up to it, the chief Priests and Elders that effected it, the *Sadduces* that rejoic'd at it; all these assented to the Truth of it, and declar'd him to be a dead Man. The merciless Soldiers found him dead when they came to dispatch him, and therefore forbore to break his Legs, as they did those that were executed with him; but being enrag'd that their Cruelty was thus prevented, to shew their spite they thrust a Spear into his side, from whence issued forth both Water and Blood, the Emblems of the two Sacraments he instituted.

In short, the many mortal Wounds he receiv'd were not only sufficient but necessary to dispatch him; and the Violence us'd to his Body, which was in all things (Sin only excepted) like ours, forc'd his Soul out of it, and made a true and real Separation between them.

As for the manner of his Death, the Apostle tells us, he became obedient unto Death, even the Death of the Cross; which was of all others the most painful and the most ignominious way of Dying.

The Painfulness of his Death may be easily conceiv'd, if we consider how his tender Limbs were stretched out and tenter'd upon the Cross, and how long he continued in that tormenting Posture: they *pierced his Hands and his Feet*, Parts exquisitely sensible and tender, and yet being no vital Parts, did not dispatch but prolong his Pain; by which for the space of six hours he felt himself Dying, and endur'd the racking Tortures of a lingering Death, their cruel Scourges all the while fetching Blood, and making long Furrows on his Back; by which we may easily suppose that he felt much more than the pangs of an ordinary Death.

And as his Death was thus dolorous and painful, so was it no less ignominious and shameful too; for he underwent the infamous Punishment of Slaves, Robbers and the vilest Malefactors, and was put to death with them. Before they led him forth to Execution, they kept him a while to sport themselves in his Misery, and to make him the Subject of their Scoffs and Mockery; to which end they *platted for him a Crown of Thorns*, setting it on his Head, and *putting a Reed into his right Hand* in waggery, bow'd to him, saying, *Hail the King of the Jews*. After which they nail'd him to the Cross, reproaching him with all his former Miracles, and saying, He sav'd others, himself he cannot save; the multitude came about him not to pity, but deride him, and as if he had been the vilest Miscreant upon Earth, they spit in his Face, and in all his Pain and Anguish pour'd on him not Tears but Scorn and Contempt; and when he had thus hung on the Cross from the sixth to the ninth Hour, upon the tender Wounds of his Hands and Feet, he gave up the Ghost.

Thus died the Son of God, a real but withal a miserable, shameful and accursed Death, resigning up himself to his Father that sent him, in these words, *Father, into thy Hands I commend my Spirit*.

Now because the bloody Instruments of his Death rather rejoic'd than repented at his Fall, the whole Creation seem'd to lament the Death of so great a Person; the Sun drew in its light, as unwilling to behold so sad a Spectacle; the Earth trembl'd and quak'd, as impatient of bearing up those that occasion'd it; the Heavens were all overcast, and cloth'd in Black, as the chief Mourners at his Funeral; the Veil of the Temple was rent in twain from the Top to the Bottom; the hard Rocks clave, the Graves open'd, and all things but these unrelenting Jews were appal'd

appal'd and confounded at the Passion of our Lord.

Thus having shew'd the certainty and manner of his Death, I proceed,

Secondly, To consider the Cause of it, which we are here told were our Sins, *Christ died for our Sins*: Our Sins were both the Cause, and likewise the Effect and End of his Death; the Guilt of them drew this Misery upon him, and the Expiation of them was the effect and end of his Sufferings.

1. I say, Christ died for our Sins as the cause and occasion of his Death; *the Wages of Sin is Death* (saith the Apostle.) Sin is the meritorious Cause of all Suffering, and calls for it, as any other Work does for its Wages: *Death enter'd into the World by Sin* (saith the same Apostle) *and so Death pass'd upon all Men, for that all have sinned.*

Now tho the High, Holy and Harmless Son of God had no Sin of his own to die for, and consequently could not suffer it upon his own score; yet when he graciously undertook to be our Surety and Saviour, the whole burden of our Sins lay upon his Shoulders, and he became answerable to the Justice of God for the Transgressions of Mankind: hence was that hard saying of *Luther*, who stil'd our Saviour *Peccatorum maximus*, the greatest of Sinners, *viz.* not by any personal Guilt of his own, but only by Imputation; and having taken so great a weight of Guilt upon him, it sunk him into the Grave, and brought upon him the bitterness of Death; a Death heighten'd with all the Ingredients of Pain and Shame, that the most ingenious and inrag'd Malice could invent or execute; a Death wherein the Wrath of God, the Spite of Men, and the Rage of all the Powers of Darknes most fatally conspir'd. And we may cease our wonder at the severity of Christ's Sufferings, when we reflect on that vast complicated Guilt that occasion'd them: for if one Sin were enough to turn *Adam* and his Posterity out of Paradise, and to set up a flaming Sword to prevent their Return; if one Sin (whatever it were) was sufficient to throw the laps'd Angels out of Heaven, and to reserve them in Chains of Darknes to the Judgment of the great Day; what an unsupportable weight (think you) must be the concurrent Guilt of all Mankind's Transgressions? A pressure sure that must sink the stoutest *Atlas*, and make the whole Creation groan.

2. But as our Sins were the Cause, so was the Expiation of them the Effect and End of his Death: because we could not satisfy divine Justice in our own Persons, he was willing to *make his Soul an offering for Sin*; and because *without shedding of Blood there is no Remission*, he was content to shed his own most precious Blood to be our all-sufficient Ransom and Atonement: by this means he hath effectually made our Peace, and reconcil'd us unto God by the Blood of his Cross, which occasion'd that bold Challenge of the Apostle, *Who shall lay any thing to the Charge of God's Elect? it is God that justifieth, who is he that condemneth? it is Christ that died, yea rather that is risen again*, Rom. 8. 34, 35. From whence I proceed to the

Third and last thing in our Text, which was to shew that Christ's Death for our Sins was *according to the Scriptures*; that is, according to the Account given of it in the Old Testament; there we find many Types and Prophecies of the Death of the Messiah, which were all punctually fulfil'd in the Death of our Blessed Saviour.

The Death of righteous *Abel* the Son of *Adam*, is by some made a Type of the Death of Christ the Son of God, only with this difference, that the former call'd to Heaven for Vengeance, the latter for Mercy; for which reason the *Blood of Christ is said to speak better Things than that of Abel*, Heb. 12. 24.

Isaac's being offer'd up in the Intention of *Abraham*, represented the Death of the *Messiah*; and his being sav'd by a vicarious Sacrifice, signified his restoring to Life again, *Gen. 22. Joseph's* being sold into *Egypt*, hated, imprison'd and slain too in the Intention of his envious Brethren, represented the Betraying, Imprisoning and Murder of our Blessed Saviour.

More clearly, the Sacrifices under the Law, where *all Things were purg'd with Blood, and without shedding of Blood was no Remission*, were but so many Types and Representations of this All-sufficient Sacrifice by the Death of Christ.

But as this was foresignified in Types, so was it more plainly foretold in Prophecies: the Prophet *Isaiah*, in his famous 53d Chapter, gives such a lively Description of the Death of our Saviour, as if he had seen it acted in his Days, telling us of his being cut off from the Land of the Living, of his making his Grave with the Wicked, and his Soul an Offering for Sin, with many other Circumstances of his Passion.

The

The Prophet *Daniel* expressly foretold of the *Messias*, that he *should be cut off, and make an Atonement for the Sins of the People*: by which, as by many other Predictions to the same purpose, we see how truly the Apostle here affirms, that *Christ* died for our Sins according to the Scriptures. But besides this, we read in Scripture of a certain Compact and Covenant made between the Father and the Son concerning the Salvation of Mankind by the Death of a Redeemer, in which God the Father promis'd, that *if he would make his Sout an Offering for Sin, he should see his Seed, and prolong his Days, and the Work should prosper in his Hand*, Isa. 53. Of the Son's Acceptance hereof, the Psalmist likewise informs us, saying, in the Person of our Saviour, *Lo I come, in the Volume of thy Book it is written of me, to do thy will O God*: Hence he is said to be the *Lamb of God slain before the Foundation of the World*, viz. in his eternal Decree and Determination: And St. Peter tells us, that *he was by the determinate Counsel and Foreknowledge of God, by wicked hands crucified and slain*, Acts 2. 23. All which plainly shew him to have died for our Sins according to the Scriptures.

But hath *Christ's* dying for our Sins secur'd us from dying for them? Yes, if we perform the Conditions of Faith and Repentance upon which he hath promised it; otherwise we shall be so far from sharing the Benefit and Merits of his Death, that we shall fare the worse for it, and receive the greater Condemnation: and therefore St. Peter exhorts all Men to *repent, that their Sins may be blotted out*, Acts 3. 19. *Christ's* Death did not purchase for us a liberty to live as we list, for this would be to *sin because Grace hath abounded*, yea to turn the Grace of God into wantonness. No, *Christ* died only for the Penitent and Believer; and *except we repent, we shall all likewise perish*. And this will lead me in the

Last place, To the Use that we are to make of *Christ's* Death; which is,

1. To die unto Sin, and to live no longer therein: this the Apostle makes to be the end of *Christ's* dying, to kill Sin in us by the Sacrifice of himself, and to vanquish the Dominion of it by the Power of his Grace: *He gave himself for us to redeem us from all Iniquity, and purify to himself a peculiar People zealous of good Works*, Tit. 2. 14. And elsewhere, *he bare our Sins in his own Body on the Tree, that we being dead unto Sin, should live unto Righteousness*, 1 Pet. 2. 24. So that to live in Sin is to defeat the

the End of Christ's Death ; yea 'tis as far as in us lies to kill him again, and to renew his Misery by repeating the Cause of it : for shame therefore let us not hug that Viper in our Breast that stung our Saviour to death, and will leave a Worm to torture us that never dies ; but rather let us nail them all to his Cross, or drown them in the red Sea of his Blood. |

2. The Death of Christ should beget in us the highest Degrees of Love and Gratitude : *Greater Love than this hath no Man, than that he should lay down his Life for his Friend ;* and yet our Saviour shew'd greater, in laying it down for his Enemies. What strong Obligation hath this laid on us, to give our selves up to him, who gave himself for us ? and to *present our Bodies to him as a holy and lively Sacrifice, which is but our reasonable Service ?* He hath dearly bought us at the costly price of his own Blood, and therefore the least we can do in Equity, is to *glorify him with our Bodies and Spirits, which are both his :* And if there be any spark of Love or Gratitude in us, it will constrain us thus to judg, *That if Christ died for all, they who live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but to him that died for them,* 2 Cor. 5. 14, 15.

3. Christ's Death may teach us firmly to trust and rely upon him, who *by one Sacrifice of himself hath perfected for ever them that believe.* By this he hath made a full Compensation to Divine Justice, the greatness of his Person putting a far greater merit and value upon his Death, than if all Mankind had died for their own Sins ; so that we may receive him as an all-sufficient Saviour, and safely lay the whole stress of our Souls and Salvation upon his Atonement.

4. Christ's Death is an admirable Pattern of Patience, and may teach us to imitate it in our sharpest Trials : *Forasmuch as Christ hath suffer'd for us in the Flesh* (says the Apostle) *we ought to arm our selves likewise with the same mind.* We can suffer nothing comparable to the Anguish and Horror of his Death ; and therefore by looking to him, we may be kept from fainting under lighter Tribulations.

5. Christ's Death is a strong Motive to the greatest Charity ; for if *God so loved us* (says the Apostle) *we ought likewise to love one another.* Neither can we reasonably expect to find the Effects of Christ's Love to us, unless we shew it in some measure to the Brethren.

Lastly, His Death should engage us often to meditate upon and remember it, especially in the Holy Eucharist ; 'twas our Saviour's

our's own Command, yea his dying Request, that we would remember him when he was gone, and call to mind what he hath done and suffer'd for us. That we might not forget him, he instituted a Feast to that purpose, where his Death is in lively Symbols represented to our view, and the Benefits of it by receiving of them convey'd to us; to which therefore not only Duty and Gratitude, but the Interest and Safety of our Souls should persuade us frequently to address.

DISCOURSE XVI.

John 19. 40. Then took they the Body of Jesus, and wound it in linen Clothes, with the Spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury.

IN my last we left our Blessed Saviour *crucified and dead* on the Cross, and I hope not without that grief and sorrow that is proper for so sad a Spectacle: in this we are to behold him taken from thence, and carried away to be *buried*; in which we are to follow him to his Funeral, and to pay the last Office we are wont to do to our deceased Friends, to attend him to his Grave. To this we are led by the words of our Text, where we read, that when *Joseph of Arimathea*, a Disciple of Christ, had upon his Request to *Pilate* obtain'd the Body of Jesus, and *Nicodemus* a Ruler of the Jews had brought a mixture of Myrrh and Aloes to embalm him for his Funeral, *They took his Body, and wound it in Linen Clothes with the Spices, and, as the manner of the Jews was, proceeded to bury him.* In discoursing hereof, I must observe to you,

First, The antient Custom and great Care that all Nations have taken about the Burial of the Dead.

Secondly, That the Burial, as well as the Death of the Messias, was typify'd and foretold by the Prophets in the Old Testament.

Thirdly, That our Saviour's Burial was according to that Custom, and answer'd those Predictions. For the

First,

First, The great Care that has been ever taken by all Nations for the Burial of the Dead, is recorded both in Sacred and Profane History; the Holy Patriarchs of old not only purchased burying Places for this purpose, but likewise observ'd all decent Rites and Solemnities at the Interment of the Dead, as we may read at large in the Books of *Moses*; and they who neglected, or by way of Punishment were deny'd them, are said to *be buried with the Burial of an Ass*, Jer. 22. 19. The *Egyptians* were more than ordinarily careful about their Dead, and were at great Labour and Cost for Spices to imbalm and preserve them. The *Romans* reckon'd it a principal Act of Piety and Justice to bury their Dead, and had a peculiar Deity to preside over that Office; they look'd upon it as a Law of the immortal Gods, and to pay this last Office was *justa facere*, to do Right to the Dead; to omit it was a great Crime, and to be depriv'd of it a great Punishment. The *Greeks* likewise were very careful in this matter, and esteem'd it inhumane to neglect the Rites of Sepulture: and generally among all Nations this antient and laudable practice hath obtain'd; which hath been so far from being contradicted by Christianity, that wherever the Christian Religion came, it hath been most religiously observ'd. For whereas before in some Places the dead Bodies were wont to be burnt, and only the Ashes of them preserv'd in Urns; where Christianity prevail'd, this Custom was laid aside, and the dead Bodys always found a decent Interment. Our Saviour commends what *Mary Magdalen* and the other *Mary* did of this kind for a *good Work*. We read that when *Stephen* was stoned, *devout Men carried him out to his Burial, and made Lamentation over him*, Acts 8. 2. And when *Dorcas* died, *they wash'd her and laid her in an upper Chamber* in order to her Funeral, Acts 9. 37. So careful were the Primitive Christians of the Rites of Burial; and we know this laudable practice continues with no small Solemnity to this day.

But upon what is this general Practice of burying the Dead founded? Why, partly upon some common Principles in Nature, which cannot bear the Noisomness of a Carcase, or suffer the Shame and Nakedness of human Bodies to be expos'd to open View, and much less to see them devour'd by the Birds of the Air, or the Beasts of the Field: and partly likewise upon some higher Principles of Religion, which teach us to look upon our Bodies as the Members of Christ, and the Temples of the Holy Ghost,

and so not to be carelessly neglected or thrown away at the Dissolution, but to be laid up and decently deposited in the Grave, in hopes of a glorious Resurrection.

Thus we see the great Care that hath been taken by all Nations to bury their Dead, together with the Reasons both natural and religious that have mov'd all Mankind to do so; by which it appears that what we do of this kind to our deceased Friends is an Office of Piety, and when we are imploy'd in it, we are doing a good Work. Let us next see what Care was taken of this Nature towards the Sacred Body of our Blessed Saviour.

That he was truly and properly a dead Man, by a real Separation of the Soul from the Body, hath been already fully prov'd: after which we find the Piety of *Joseph of Arimathea*, by asking of *Pilate* his dead Body, secur'd it from any farther Cruelty and Contempt; and the Charity of *Nicodemus* by bringing Spices preserv'd and prepared it for a decent Burial.

But before I come to that, I must observe to you,

Secondly, That the Burial, as well as Death of the promised Messiah, was typified and foretold by the Prophets in the Old Testament. The Prophet *Jonas*'s being swallow'd up by a Whale, and lying *three Days and three Nights in his Belly*, plainly typified, and is accordingly apply'd to the Son of Man's being swallow'd up of the Grave, and lying *three Days and three Nights in the heart of the Earth*, Mat. 12. 40.

The Prophet *Isaiah* in his 53d Chapter foretold not only the Messiah's cutting off from the Land of the Living, but likewise his making his Grave with the Wicked and the Rich in his Death: And as he was to be numbred among the Transgressors, tho he did no Violence, neither was any Deceit found in his Mouth, so was he to die and be inter'd in like manner with them, ver. 9, 12. The Psalmist foretold and directs to his Sepulchre, when speaking in the Person of Christ, he said, *my Flesh shall rest in hope*; that is, in the Chambers of the Grave, where tho his Body should be laid up a while, and rest in the common Receptacle and Habitation of the Dead, yet he should not abide a Prisoner there, nor continue so long as to see Corruption, Psal. 16. 9, 10. All which, beside the common Custom of the Jews to bury their Dead, and commit their departed Friends to the Sepulchres of their Fathers, are plain Predictions not only of the Death, but Sepulture and Burial of the Messiah. From whence, I must in the

Third place, attend the Funeral of our Blessed Saviour, and not only see him laid in the Grave, but shew him to be buried according to those Predictions of it. For the Proof hereof St. *Matthew* tells us, that *Joseph of Arimathea* took the *Body of Jesus*, and wrapped it in a clean *Linen Cloth*, and laid it in his own new Tomb which he had hewn out of a *Rock*, and roll'd a great *Stone* to the Door of the *Sepulchre*, and departed, *Mat. 27. 59, 60.* St. *Mark* concurs with him herein, telling us, that the same Person bought fine *Linen*, took him down, and wrapped him in it, laying him in a *Sepulchre* hewn out of a *Rock*, and rolling a *Stone* before the Door of it, *Mark 15. 46.* St. *Luke* agrees with both in the Relation of it, saying, that *this rich Man* waiting for the *Kingdom of God*, beg'd of *Pilate* the *Body of our Saviour*; and having obtain'd it, took it down and wrapped it in *Linen*, and laid it in a *Sepulchre* hewn in *Stone*, where in never Man before was laid, *Luke 23. 52, 53.* All which exactly agrees with the Account of it given by St. *John* in the words of the Text, *They took the Body of Jesus, and wound it in Linen Clothes with the Spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury.* And if in the Mouth of two or three Witnesses is the Truth of a thing thought sufficiently establish'd, how steadfastly ought we to believe this matter of Fact, which stands confirm'd by the Testimony of so many?

But how came our Saviour, who was crucified by the Roman Power, to find the Favour of Burial, which was not wont to be granted to others that underwent that sort of Punishment? For by the Roman Laws, they who suffer'd this way were not to be buried, but were to continue on the Cross till their Bodies were either devour'd by the Fovls of the Air, or rotted and consum'd away by the Injury of the Wind and Weather: And where there was any Fear or Suspicion of taking down the Body, a Guard of Soldiers was set to watch it, lest any out of Kindness or Pity should carry it away and bury it. And therefore it may be fitly enough ask'd how our Saviour came to obtain this Privilege? In answer to which,

This Favour was obtain'd partly upon the Intercession of a great Man in the Country who begged his Body, and partly upon the Request of the Jews, by whose Suit and Importunity he was sentenc'd to undergo this Punishment: and both so order'd by divine Providence for fulfilling the Prophecies concerning him.

Tho

Tho the Law of the *Romans*, for the greater Shame and Terror of Crucifixion, requir'd the exposing the Body till it was either devour'd or consum'd ; yet that Law was not so strict as to admit of no Relaxation, for the *Roman* Governors had Power to mitigate it, and to grant the leave of Burial : Accordingly therefore we read, That *Joseph of Arimathea, a rich Man and honourable*, and consequently of no mean Interest in his Country, *came and besought Pilate that he might take away the Body of Jesus*. Pilate was not backward in granting this Request, but commanded the Body to be deliver'd ; and indeed he who so oft declar'd, that *he found no Fault in him* when alive, could not well deny this Favor being dead : and having obtain'd this leave, he took his sacred Body from the cursed Tree in order to his Interment. 'Tis said indeed, that this *honorable Counsellor came secretly for fear of the Jews*, doubting lest they, who called so loudly for his Crucifying, should proceed farther to prevent his Interment : but it prov'd quite otherwise, for the Jews join'd in the Request, and they who clamor'd for his Death petition'd for his Burial. That which mov'd them hereunto, was the general Custom of the Jews to bury those that were sentenc'd to die, and the same Day too that they suffer'd ; which Custom was grounded on a Law of *Moses*, requiring, that *if a Man have committed a Sin worthy of Death, and he be to be put to death, and thou hang him on a Tree, his Body shall not remain all Night upon the Tree, but thou shalt in any wise bury him that Day*, Deut. 21. 22, 23. This made the Jews, that his Body might not remain on the Cross the next Day, which was their Sabbath Day, beseech Pilate that it might be taken away and bury'd, as we read John 19. 31. The Verse before our Text tells us, that *Nicodemus* a Ruler of the Jews, who at the first came to Jesus by Night, now came more openly, and brought a Mixture of Myrrh and Aloes, a hundred Pound Weight, to embalm him.

This Custom of embalming dead Bodies hath been very ancient ; the *Egyptians* took more than ordinary Care about it, for we read that they embalm'd their Dead in the most curious and costly manner imaginable, which some think proceeded from their Hopes of a Resurrection ; others ascribe it to an Opinion, that the Soul does not chuse a new Body till the former be corrupted, and therefore to preserve its former Habitation, they us'd the most exquisite and expensive Art to keep it from Corruption, by which means we read of Bodies thus preserv'd many hundred Years : yea, we are told of some embalm'd near three thousand Years

ago, which are found intire at this Day. This Custom we find in our Saviour's Days, who commended the *Woman, having an Alabaster Box of Ointment very precious, for breaking it and pouring it on his Head*; saying, *she did this beforehand to anoint his Body to the Burying*, Mark 14. 3, 8. And both Mary Magdalen and the other Mary bought Spices, *that they might come and anoint him*, Mark 16. 1.

But beside the Spices, our Text tells us, that his Body was wrapped up in Linen Clothes; this was likewise the antient Custom of arraying the Dead, as appears by *Lazarus, who came forth bound Hand and Feet, with the Grave-Clothes, and his Face bound about with a Napkin*, John 11. 44. In like manner St. Peter, looking into the Sepulchre of our Saviour, *saw the linen Clothes lie, and the Napkin that was about his Head*, John 20. 6, 7.

Thus having, according to the Custom of the Jews, prepar'd his Body for the Sepulchre, *Joseph of Arimathea, a good Man and a just, who also waited for the Kingdom of God*, prepar'd a Sepulchre for his Body, and such a one too wherein never Man laid; for he hewed it out of a Rock for his own Tomb, where having decently laid up the Body of our Lord, he rolled a great Stone at the door of the Sepulchre and departed. Thus was our Blessed Saviour honorably entomb'd, and his Body inter'd with all the solemn Rites of Burial.

All which was so order'd by divine Providence, for the fulfilling the Prophecies concerning him.

He was numbred among Transgressors by his living and dying with them: After which, according to the Prophecy of *Isaiab*, he made his Grave with the Wicked, by being bury'd after the manner of sinful Flesh; and likewise with the Rich in his Death, being intomb'd in a large hollow Vault, prepar'd for the Burying-place of a great and rich Counsellor, where, according to the Prediction of the Psalmist, *his Flesh did rest in Hope* of a glorious Resurrection, which in the space of three Days, before the Body began to putrify, came to pass; thereby verifying the following words, *Thou wilt not leave my Soul in Hell, nor suffer thy Holy One to see Corruption*. By which the Prophecies concerning him were fully and compleatly accomplish'd.

Thus we have brought the Son of God to his Grave, in which he was laid by a Counsellor and Ruler of the Jews, the whole Action being perform'd as the manner of the Jews is to bury; where we must leave him, with a Band of Soldiers watching the Sepulchre, and see what we may learn from his Burial. And,

1. Christ's Burial may fully confirm us in the Truth of his Death, and the Verity of his Resurrection; for Men are not wont to bury any but those that are dead, nor are any said to rise again that were never bury'd. *Pilate* was very inquisitive of those who requested the Body of Jesus, *how long he had been dead*, and was fully satisfied of his Death before he consented to the Delivery of him up to be buried: And we too may be as thorowly convinc'd that he was a dead Man, when he was thus publicly and solemnly laid in his Grave by those that effected it; and as firmly believe his Resurrection, when he was after found alive by those that expected it.

2. Christ's Burial should teach us a Conformity to it by being dead and bury'd unto Sin, and his Rising again should make us walk in Newness of Life. There is a mystical Meaning and Design in all the great Transactions, both of our Saviour's Life and Death; and we are to learn many great and weighty Lessons from both. The Apostle minds us, *That we are buried with him in Baptism, that the Body of Sin might be destroy'd*; and elsewhere, *that we are bury'd with him unto Death, that henceforth we should die unto Sin, and live unto him who died for us*. By this we shall make a right use of the Death of our Saviour, and our Sorrow for Sin is our best Mourning at his Funeral.

Lastly, From our Saviour's Burial, and the Solemnities us'd about it, we may learn the decent Care that is to be taken of our dead Bodies, and the due Honour and Respect that is to be paid to them. This is no more than what hath been observ'd in all Times and Nations, who have ever paid some Respects to the Remains of the Dead, and laid them up safe in the Repositories of the Grave; and to be depriv'd of it hath been ever reckon'd one of the greatest Punishments that could be inflicted on the worst of Malefactors. But this decent and laudable Practice is so well observ'd among us to this Day, that little else needs to be spoken to it; but only to admonish some upstart Sectaries lately risen up among us, whose want of Understanding is the sole Cause of that great Neglect, and the little Regard they shew in this matter.

DISCOURSE XVII.

Acts 2. 27. *Thou wilt not leave my Soul in Hell.*

WE are yet upon the Fourth Article of the Creed, which contains the several Steps and Degrees of our Saviour's Passion.

In the Exposition whereof, having seen our Blessed Saviour *crucified, dead and buried*, I proceed to the last and lowest step of his Humiliation, contain'd in these words, *He descended into Hell.*

The belief of this Branch of the Article is grounded on these words of Holy Scripture, *Thou wilt not leave my Soul in Hell.* They are part of St. Peter's excellent and successful Sermon to the Jews, wherein he minds them of their great Cruelty in crucifying and putting to death the Lord of Life; which had that good Effect upon them, that many hundreds of them were prick'd at the Heart with the sense and remorse for their Sin, and ask'd what they should do to be saved from the Guilt of it?

In this Sermon, after some short account of what *David* foretold of the Death and Burial of the Messiah, St. Peter brings him in saying, in the Person of our Saviour, *Thou wilt not leave my Soul in Hell.* Which words, by reason of the Ambiguity of the word *Sheol* in Hebrew, and *Hades* in Greek, both which are in English translated *Hell*, have somewhat a difficult and obscure signification; and therefore, in explaining of them, I must,

First, Shew the most probable sense and meaning of this Article.

And, *Secondly*, See what use we are to make of it. For the

First, Divers senses have been given of Christ's *descending into Hell*; the principal whereof I shall discover and examine, that we may the better come to the knowledg of the Truth in this matter. And,

1. Some, because the extremity of pain is in Scripture sometimes express'd by *Hell*, as in that of the Psalmist, *The Pains of Hell got hold upon me*, have thought this Expression to refer to those

those grievous and almost insufferable Pains which Christ indur'd in his Soul in the Garden, when in his Agony he sweat great drops of Blood, and groaning under the horror of the Dereliction, he cried out in the anguish and bitterness of his Soul, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* Which Pains being attended with some kind of Despair, and consequently of the same Nature with the Torments of the Damned, are compar'd to and express'd by Hell.

But these being antecedent to his Crucifixion, and going before both his Death and Burial, cannot be his *descending into Hell*; which both in Holy Scripture, and the Creed, plainly relate to something that came after and follow'd both.

2. Therefore others, because the word *Sheol* here translated *Hell*, is in Scripture frequently us'd to signify no more than the Grave; as in that of *Jacob*, *I will go down mourning to my Son in Hell*, that is, in the Grave, *Gen. 37. 35.* and again, *Ye shall bring down my gray Hairs with sorrow to the Grave*, the same word which is here render'd *Hell*, *Gen. 42. 38.* I say others, for this reason, have thought his descending into Hell to be no more than his going into the Grave, or the lower parts of the Earth.

But this importing no more than his being buried, which is mention'd before, it cannot reasonably be conceiv'd, that in this short Summary of the Christian Faith, the same thing should be repeated again in a different Phrase, if no more were intended by it.

But that which gives some seeming credit to this Opinion is, that in some Creeds, where his Burial is mention'd, his Descent into Hell is left out; and in others, where his Descent into Hell is mention'd, his Burial is omitted; of which no reason can be assign'd, but that they import the same thing. However that be, 'tis certain the Holy Scripture speaks of the Descent into Hell, as a matter relating to the Soul, *Thou wilt not leave my Soul in Hell*: whereas Burial can relate only to the Body. Moreover, both the Holy Scripture and the Creeds making the Descent into Hell a matter that follow'd after and beside the Burial; and the Creeds almost generally receiving and putting both into that Order, plainly shew them to import two distinct things; the one referring to the Body, the other to the Soul.

3. Others again taking Hell for the Place of the damn'd, think that Christ descended into it, not locally but virtually; that is, he went not thither in Person, but in the Power and Efficacy

Efficacy of his Death, which had some Influence upon the Souls detain'd there.

But this is altogether a precarious and groundless Opinion, having no Foundation either in Scripture or Reason: yea, so far from either, that 'tis inconsistent with both. For what Influence can Christ's Death have upon those that are consign'd to their everlasting State? Not to ease them, for *the Worm there never dies, nor the Fire ever goes out*; not to release them, for *from Hell there is no Redemption*: nor can any Sense be made of these words, *Thou wilt not leave my Soul in Hell*, if he were only virtually there.

4. Others think Christ's *descending into Hell*, or *Hades*, was his Soul's going into the Mansion or Receptacle of departed Spirits, where they are to abide till they return and reunite again to their Bodies.

In explaining hereof, they tell us of a double Receptacle or Mansion of Spirits; the one of the Spirits of good Men, who depart hence in the Lord; the other of bad Men, who depart with the Guilt of their Sins upon them; and both to remain in that separate State till the Resurrection: adding, that when Christ's Body went to the Grave, his Soul went to *Hades*, that is, to these infernal and invisible Regions of departed Spirits. This is the frequent and receiv'd Opinion of most of the antient Fathers, and is still embrac'd by many to this day.

But to which of these Mansions, either of good or bad Spirits, Christ's Soul went, and what was the End or Design of its going thither, is not so fully agreed among them. They who affirm'd Christ's Soul to have descended into the Habitation of evil Spirits that departed hence in their Sins, assign a double Reason of it.

The one to *preach to the Spirits in Prison*, in order to the releasing of all or some of them; and for this they alledg that obscure place of St. Peter, who tells us of *Christ's being put to death in the Flesh, but quicken'd by the Spirit, by which he went and preach'd to the Spirits in Prison*, 1 Pet. 3. 16.

The other to triumph over those evil Spirits, that either refus'd the Tenders of Mercy themselves, or kept others from accepting of them: And for this they alledg that of St. Paul, who tells us of *Christ's spoiling Principalities, and Powers, and the Rulers of the Darknes of this World, making a Show of them openly, and triumphing over them*.

But

But neither of those Places relate to any thing that follow'd after Christ's Death, but before, and therefore cannot reasonably be apply'd to his Descent into Hell. For the

First, The preaching to the Spirits in Prison, is said to be to those that liv'd, and *were disobedient in the days of Noah*; which was long before either the Birth or Death of our Saviour.

Beside, The Spirit by which Christ is there said to preach, was not his Soul, but the Divine Spirit; for 'twas by that Spirit by which he was quicken'd, which was no other than the Power of God. For the

Second, Christ's Triumph over the Powers of Darkeness, is by the Apostle that mentions it expressly said to be *on the Cross*, and so went before his Death, and consequently cannot be apply'd to his Descent into Hell, which came after.

They who affirm'd Christ's Soul to have descended into that Place of *Hades*, where the Souls of the Faithful, from the Death of righteous *Abel* to the Death of Christ, were detain'd, have thought the end of his descending thither to be the dissolving of that Power that held them there, and the translating of them to a more glorious Place, and happier State in the highest Heavens. This was the receiv'd Opinion of the Schoolmen, who generally deliver'd it as the Sense of the Church. Indeed there were few that question'd or disbeliev'd Christ's Descent into those Mansions of departed Spirits; tho some doubted such a Translation of Place, or Alteration of Condition, then or there made by him, and conceiv'd the Souls of all Men to continue detain'd there, and not to enter into Heaven till the Resurrection: tho Christ having Work to do, which other Souls had not; and being, by his Father's Consent and Appointment, to rise again in three days, came out from thence at the time appointed, and leaving the Habitation of Spirits, resum'd again and was reunited to his former Body; which was the Sense and Reason of these words, *Thou wilt not leave my Soul in Hades, nor my Body in the Grave to see Corruption.*

The truth is, this word *Hades*, which was us'd to signify this separate State of the Souls, even of good Men, that departed this Life, being almost constantly translated by the word Hell, has sounded harsh in the Ears of most Men; and being generally understood of the Torments of the damned, has occasion'd most of the Difficulties and Mistakes about this Article: for many (as well they might) have thought it very improper to

look for the Soul of Christ in that dreadful Place of Horreur and Darknes; or that he, who by his Death purchas'd Heaven for the Elect, should himself descend to Hell, that deep Abyfs of Fire and Brimstone; or be found in Torments with *Judas, Dives*, and the other reprobated Crew.

But from the beginning it was not so; for this word *Hades*, both in Scripture and antient Writers, has a milder and better signification, and has been frequently us'd to signify the invisible Region and Habitation of blessed Souls: 'tis in Scripture call'd *Paradise, Heaven, and Abraham's Bosom*; where indeed it may be proper enough to believe and seek the Soul of our Saviour. Accordingly we find him saying to the penitent Thief upon the Cross, *This day shalt thou be with me in Paradise*; that is, in *Hades*, where he himself was going. And the Soul of *Lazarus* is said, upon the Dissolution, *to be cary'd into Abraham's Bosom*; that is, into the Mansion or Receptacle of holy departed Spirits.

This is by some represented as a State of Indolence and Rest, much like that in which the Soul of a living Man is, when the Body is in a deep and profound Sleep: This they gather from the words of St. *John*, who tells us, that good Men immediately upon their death rest from their Labours, Rev. 14. 13. meaning, they are translated to a quiet Habitation, that is free from any farther Trouble or Pain; for which reason they are said to sleep in or with the Lord *Jesus*, 1 Thes. 4. 14.

Others again represent this as a State of real but imperfect Happiness, wherein the Soul is still awake and active, participating of some lower Degrees of Bliss; of which yet it has so pleasing a Sense, as sets it still a looking and longing for a compleater Blessedness. This is gather'd from the Words of the same Apostle, who pronounces good Men *Blessed at their Death, because they die in the Lord*; that is, in the Favour and Fruition of him, having some faint and imperfect Glimpses of him, which set them a crying with the Souls under the Altar, *How long, O Lord, holy and true! and come Lord Jesus, come quickly*. And this will lead me to the

Last and I think the likeliest sense of these Words, which is, to take Hell or *Hades* here for the State of Death, and so interpreting Christ's descending into it, by his passing and continuing a while in the State of the dead; his Body going into the Grave, the Place of all the living; and his Soul into *Hades*, or the Habitation of departed Spirits, the Receptacle of all the dead:

dead: by both which he fulfil'd the whole Law of Death, and was to all intents and purposes a dead Man.

This seems to be the fullest and clearest Interpretation of this Article, being encumber'd with fewest Difficulties, and giving the fairest Account of his passing from Death to Life again: for by this means neither *was his Soul left in Hell* to inhabit Darkness, nor *his Body in the Grave to see Corruption*; but both restor'd to Life at the time prefix'd by the Prediction of it. *David* (as the Apostle discouries in this Chapter) *foreseeing this, spake of Christ's Resurrection*; and whereas that Prophet in his own Person continues under the Power of Death, and *saw Corruption*, our blessed Saviour, of whom he spake, continu'd not under the Power of either, his Soul being neither detain'd in the infernal Regions beyond the time appointed, nor his Flesh kept so long in the Grave as to putrify or become corrupted.

That this is the most probable and proper Sense of this Article, will appear,

1. Because it takes off all redundant and superfluous Repetitions of the same thing in the Apostles Creed; which in such a brief Epitome of the Christian Faith, may neither be suppos'd or admitted: And yet if Christ's *descending into Hell* imply'd no more than his Soul's departing out of the Body, which is imply'd in his being dead, or his Body's going into the Grave, which is the same with his being bury'd, this could not be avoided.

2. This Interpretation includes something distinct from his Death and Burial, and according to the Order of the Creed coming after both: for to abide for some time in the State of Death, adds somewhat over and above to being dead, it being not impossible to the Divine Power to restore Life the very next Minute after Death; and the Soul's going to the proper Place of the dead, is a distinct thing from the Body's going to the Grave, *the House appointed for all living*; which implies something farther and beside being bury'd, and consequently takes off both Defect and Redundancy.

3. This Exposition contains something necessary to be known and assented to, in order to the Belief of his Death that went before, and his Resurrection that follow'd after it; for if Christ had not continu'd for some time in the State of Death, Men might well enough have doubted whether he had been truly dead, wanting sufficient Time and Testimony to prove it: And be-

cause the Body is not quicken'd except it die, the want of sufficient Evidence of his Death might have made the World question the Truth of his Resurrection: whereas now by his lying a while under the Power of Death, we have abundant Proof and Confirmation of both.

Thus having, as briefly as I could, explain'd this intricate and abstruse Article, let us see what Use is to be made of it. And,

1. From Christ's descending into Hell, we learn the Verity of his Soul. This is to be believ'd against a sort of Hereticks, who call'd it in question; for as there were some that deny'd the Truth of his Body, so there were others that doubted the Reality of his Soul. But as his Death is a plain Proof of the former, so is his Descent into Hell a strong Confirmation of the latter; and what has been said may fully persuade of the Truth of both.

2. We may learn hence to cease from any farther needless Questions in this difficult Matter; there are many Niceties about the Place of *Hades*, the end of Christ's going into it, the effect it had upon good and bad Spirits, and the like: which as we are not much concern'd to know, so we may be well enough content to be ignorant. 'Tis sufficient for us that he satisfy'd divine Justice and the Laws of Death for our Sins, without seeking farther Satisfaction in all the nice and needless Inquiries about it.

Lastly, Christ's descending into the infernal Regions, and thereby answering the whole Law of Death in our stead, may give us abundant Encouragement to rely upon him as the Saviour of the World, and to cast our selves upon his All-sufficient Sacrifice and Atonement.

DISCOURSE XVIII.

1 Cor. 15. 4. latter part. *That he rose again the third Day, according to the Scriptures.*

HAVING finish'd the fourth Article of the Creed, containing the several Steps of our Saviour's *Humiliation*, in which we saw him *Crucify'd, Dead, Bury'd, and Descended into Hell*; I proceed now to the Fifth,

Second Part of the Church-Catechism. 247

Fifth, which contains the first Step of his *Exaltation*; in these words, *The Third Day he rose again from the dead.*

In our last we left our Saviour in the State of the Dead, his Body in the Grave, and his Soul in *Hades*, with a Band of Soldiers guarding and watching his Sepulchre; let us now behold him with Glory rising and returning from thence, and from the Agonies of his Death pass to the Triumphs of his Resurrection: which I shall do from these words of our Text, agreeable with those in the Creed, *That he rose again the Third Day.*

In discoursing whereof, I must shew,

First, The Truth of his *Resurrection*, that he indeed *rose from the Dead.*

Secondly, The Time of his *Rising again*, and that was the *Third Day.*

Thirdly, The Manner of his Resurrection. And

Fourthly, The Ends of it. For the

First, The Truth of his Resurrection, because no Article of our Faith either deserv'd or needed a stronger Confirmation, we have a full and undoubted Proof of it. But to clear our way,

By Resurrection here we understand, the reproducing of something that was, and after was not, to the same again; or more plainly, the restoring of something that was dead to Life again.

Now that Christ did thus truly and properly rise from the dead, we have abundant Confirmation.

That he was truly dead there can be no doubt, his Soul being really separated from his Body, the one laid up in the Grave, the other in *Hades*, the Receptacle of departed Spirits.

That he truly came to Life again, by the return of the same Soul, and reunion of it to the same Body, so as to become again the same Man, is no less evident by many palpable Proofs; for he appear'd again alive to those that saw him dead, to the great Joy of his Friends that lamented it, and to the great Confusion of his Enemies that effected and rejoic'd at it.

That they might not take him for a Ghost or Spirit, appearing only in an airy phantastick Body, he bid them *Handle him and see him, for a Spirit has not Flesh and Bones, as they saw and felt him to have,* Luke 24. 37, 39.

To convince them that the Body, in which he appear'd, was the same in which he before liv'd and dy'd, he wills them *to be- hold*

hold his Hands and his Feet, that it was he himself, and no other: Yea, he bids doubting Thomas, Reach hither his Finger to feel and see the Print of the Nails that fasten'd him to the Cross, and thrust his Hand into his Side, where the Soldier's Spear had pierc'd, willing him to be no longer faithless but believing. Moreover, to remove all their Scruples, he call'd for Meat, and did eat and drink with them after he rose from the dead. He talk'd and convers'd with them, discoursing to them out of the Scriptures the things concerning himself, how it is written, Thus it behov'd him to suffer, and to rise again the Third Day, Luke 24. 46. And because our Text tells us, that this was done according to the Scriptures; 'twill be requisite to shew how this was foretold in the Old Testament, and fulfil'd under the New. For the

First, We have many Types and Prophecies in the Old Testament, foretelling the Messiah's rising again from the dead.

Isaac's living after *Abraham's* intended sacrificing of him, was a Type of our Saviour's Resurrection, who came to Life after the real Sacrifice of himself. *Joseph's* living and coming to great Honour, after he was sold, and design'd by his envious Brethren to be murder'd and made away, represented the reviving and advancing of the *Messias*, after all the Outrage and Cruelty of his Enemies. More plainly, *Jonas's* being swallow'd up by a Whale, and lying three Days and three Nights in his Belly, was a plain Type, and is accordingly apply'd to Christ's being swallow'd up of the Grave, and lying so long in the Heart of the Earth, Mat. 12. 40. And his coming forth out of the Belly of that great Fish, and being restor'd alive on the dry Land, signify'd the Messiah's being taken out of the Jaws of Death, and restor'd again unto the Land of the living.

And as this was represented in Types, so was it held forth in Prophecies. *Job* in the midst of all his Misery and Trouble declar'd, He knew that his Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the Earth; and tho after his Skin Worms destroy'd his Body, yet in his Flesh he should see God, whom he should behold with his own Eyes, tho his Reins were consum'd within him, Job 19. 25, &c. This is a plain Prediction both of Christ's, and his own Resurrection: and it must be to the Eternal Infamy of Christians, who live after the Accomplishment of this great Action, if they come short in their Belief of this Article of this good Man, who liv'd so long before it, and among those that had no Apprehension of it. *David* likewise, who foresaw the

Refur-

Resurrection of Christ, spake no less plainly of it, saying prophetically in the Person of the Messiah, that God would not *leave his Soul in Hades, nor suffer his Body to stay so long in the Grave as to see Corruption.*

But what was thus plainly typified and foretold in the Old Testament, we find as punctually fulfil'd in the New by the Resurrection of our Saviour; which being a matter of Fact done near seventeen hundred Years ago, requires full Evidence to create and continue the Belief of it; and being the great Fundamental Article of Faith, upon which the whole Fabrick of the Christian Religion stands, the Holy Spirit of God hath not been wanting to give us the clearest Evidence about it. Now the proper Proof in this case, being a matter of Fact, is the Testimony of credible Witnesses who saw it done, and of able and faithful Persons who have recorded and deliver'd it down ever since: and if it hath this, 'tis as much as the Truth of the thing requires, and the Nature of it will bear. And upon this ground it is that our Belief of this great Truth is founded.

For beside the Testimony of God himself, who raised him from the Dead, and by many Signs and Wonders attested the Truth of it; and likewise the Testimony of the Holy Angels, who told those pious Women that came to seek his Body in the Sepulchre, that they vainly *sought the Living among the Dead, for he was not there but was risen*: I say, beside this infallible Testimony, we have the Relation of Eye and Ear-Witnesses, who not only preach'd and publish'd it to the World, but by many Miracles and Sufferings seal'd the Truth of it. Now to corroborate their Testimony, there was such a full Concurrence of all Circumstances in their Evidence, as is sufficient to silence all Cavils against it. As,

1. If we consider the Number of the Witnesses, they are enough to put it out of all doubt: *This Jesus (say the twelve Apostles) hath God raised up, whereof we all are Witnesses, Act. 2. 14, 32.* St. Paul in this Chapter tells us, *that he was seen not only of the Twelve, who might easily believe what they earnestly desir'd, but of above five hundred Brethren at once, and of him too, who once persecuted all that believ'd it: yea the whole Christian Church have born witness to it ever since: and if out of the Mouth of two or three Witnesses shall every Word be establish'd; how firmly must this Truth stand, that hath proceeded out of the Mouth of so many?* Again,

2. The Persons that attested this were not Strangers to our Saviour, or such as had not the Opportunity of knowing
the

the Fact, but such as convers'd and were familiarly acquainted with him, having *been with him from the Beginning, and going in and out with him till the time of his Ascension.* Moreover,

3. This thing was not done in a Corner, or so as they might be deceiv'd or mistaken about it, but openly, in the view of the World; which made them say, *We have not follow'd cunningly devis'd Fables, when we made known unto you the Power and Presence of our Lord Jesus, but were Eye-witnesses of his Majesty; and elsewhere, We speak unto you what we have heard and seen, what we saw with our Eyes, and our Hands have handled of the Word of Life, that report we unto you,* 1 John 1. 1. Yea we read, some select Persons fitted for this purpose were predesign'd and pick'd out, in an extraordinary manner, to be the Witnesses hereof to the People.

4. These Witnesses so chosen were not a few credulous Persons, apt to believe any Report, and easy to be impos'd upon, but were at first very diffident in this matter, and had mighty Prejudices and Doubts about it; for we read, when the Women first brought the News of it, *their Words seem'd to them as an idle tale, and they believ'd them not,* Luk. 24. 11. yea we find St. Thomas so very distrustful of the matter, as to declare expressly, that *unless he could see in his hands the very Print of the Nails, and thrust his Finger into his side, he neither could or would believe it.* And yet,

5. These very Persons receiv'd such full Satisfaction of the Truth of it, as banish'd all their Doubts, and made them publish it with Boldness in all Places where they came; for *with great Power* (saith St. Luke) *gave the Apostles witness of the Resurrection of the Lord Jesus:* and even St. Thomas himself, for whose sake our Saviour condescended to all the palpable Proofs he desir'd for his Conviction, in the strength of his Faith cry'd out, *My Lord, and my God!*

6. So bold and undaunted were these Witnesses in the Delivery of this Truth, that no Bribes or Menaces could tempt them either to deny or conceal it; for when the Chief Priests and Elders strictly charg'd them under the severest Penalties to speak no more of it, or to preach in his Name; they boldly declar'd, that they were to obey God rather than Man, and no Bonds, Imprisonment, or Death it self, could prevail with them to stifle that Message they had in Commission to deliver: To which if we add,

Lastly, The mighty Success this Doctrine hath met with in all Times and Places ever since, it may serve to build us up the more firmly in this most Holy Faith; for, by the Blessing of God upon it,

the whole World is profelyted to this Belief; and tho great Endeavours have been us'd to stop the Progress and Propagation of it, yet it hath gain'd Credit every where, and like the Palm-tree rise the higher by the Attempts made to depress it: *so mightily grew the Word of God and prevail'd.* But because the Testimony of an Adversary hath been ever thought to add great Advantage and Confirmation to any Truth, we must not omit the Testimony given to Christ's Resurrection by the very Enemies and Opposers of it; for many of the Jews, who were the Instruments of his Death, became the Witnesses of his Resurrection: yea, the Soldiers that watch'd the Sepulchre, that none should come and take him away, were yet by the Evidence of the Truth forc'd to own and declare the things that were done, tho the Chief Priests and Elders brib'd them with Mony to say, that his Disciples came by Night and stole him away whilst they slept, as we read, *Mat. 28. 11, 12, 13.* Which Story confutes it self; for how could they know or testify what was done when they were asleep? which shews it at best to be but a Dream or Delusion.

Upon the whole then, if we sum up the Evidence, and consider the many Circumstances that are brought to fortify it, we may safely conclude, that no matter of Fact ever was or can be more substantially prov'd, and no rational Man can have any Cause to doubt or disbelieve this great Truth, that has not a false Byass of Atheism and Infidelity to draw him from it. From whence I proceed to consider,

Secondly, The Time of his Rising again from the Dead, which both our Text and Creed tell us was the *Third Day: he rose again the third Day.* The Prophet *Jonas's* lying three Days and three Nights in the Whale's Belly before he was rendred up; and Christ's saying of the Temple of his Body, *Destroy this Temple, and in three Days I will raise it up;* hath given us the precise time of his Resurrection. But here the Difficulty will be how to assign these three Days and three Nights; for Christ being put to Death on the Friday, and coming to Life again on the Sunday Morning, there could be but one whole Day, and two whole Nights.

This Difficulty may be soon remov'd by considering the common way of speaking in such Cases, which is by a Figure call'd *Synechdoche*, taking a part for the whole; and so taking the Friday on which he suffer'd for the first day, the Saturday following for the second, and the Sunday on which he rose for the third Day, 'twill easily make the reckoning right.

K k

This

This way of Computation is very usual and frequent in Holy Scripture, for the time of Circumcision is fix'd on the eighth Day; in computing whereof the Day of the Birth is reckon'd for one, and the Day of Circumcision for another: so that there can be but six whole Days, the other two must be taken *Synechdocically*, that is, part for the whole, to make up the full Number.

So likewise in the time of Pentecost, which is the fiftieth Day to be numbred from *Easter*, where *Easter* Day is to be reckon'd for the first, and the Day of Pentecost (which is our *Whit-sunday*) for the last; in which therefore there are but forty eight whole Days, but taking the first and the last figuratively as before compleats the whole Number.

Beside *Moses*, in the History of the Creation, making the Evening and the Morning the first Day, shews the foregoing Night in the Scripture-account to belong to the following Day; and consequently taking the preceding Night to belong to Good Friday, on which Christ died, there will be three whole Nights and two whole Days; and coming to Life the next, he may be truly and properly said to rise again the third Day.

All that needs to be farther observ'd concerning his Rising the third Day, is the Change of the Jewish Sabbath, which was on the seventh, by that means into the Lord's Day, which is the first Day of the Week; for Christ's lying in the Grave the Saturday, which thereby became a Day of Mourning and Sorrow, was in a manner the Burial of the Jewish Sabbath.

And his Rising again the next Day reviv'd it again on that Day, and turn'd it into a Day of Jubilee and Rejoicing: the Apostles and Disciples meeting together at that time solemnly to celebrate the Praises of our Maker, and the Honour of our Saviour; and the Christian Church, from their Example, continuing to do the same ever since, is a good Foundation for our observing that Day for those Purposes.

But how did Christ rise again from the Dead? Why,

1. This was done by the Divine Power, which was alone able to effect it; for no created Agent can animate or quicken a dead thing, and no less Power than that which gave Life at first can restore it when 'tis gone: and therefore tho Christ as Man underwent Death, yet he was rais'd again by the sole Power of the Godhead; which made him say, *I have Power to lay down my Life, and I have Power to take it up again*, which no mere Man could ever say or do.

2. Christ's

2. Christ's Resurrection was exactly in that way and manner in which it was promis'd and foretold the Messias should rise again, as will evidently appear to any who will compare the Prophecies about it, with the Event and Accomplishment of them.

But what were the Ends of Christ's Resurrection? Why, many and weighty.

1. His Resurrection was necessary for his own Justification, to prove him the true Messias, and to justify the Doctrine deliver'd by him, which could not be without his Rising from the Dead, for he had appeal'd to it as a Sign of his being a true Prophet, *Mat. 12. 38, 40.* He had often told them of his Resurrection, and the Language of his Enemies was, *we remember that this Deceiver said, that after three Days he would rise again.* Now if he had fail'd in this point, he had prov'd a Deceiver indeed, and none would have believ'd on him; and therefore to justify himself and his Doctrine, it was necessary he should rise again.

2. His Resurrection was necessary for our Justification too; so the Apostle tells us, *he died for our Sins, and rose again for our Justification;* he died as our Surety, and was made a Prisoner in the Grave for our Debts. Now a Prisoner we know is not wont to be releas'd till the Debt is paid, or Satisfaction made; and if Christ had been detain'd in the Grave, it could not have appear'd that our Debt was paid, or that he had satisfied for us, and therefore his Resurrection was necessary to shew our Discharge. Indeed the Price of our Redemption was paid by his Death, but no Acquittance seal'd or given till his Resurrection, and therefore we are said to be justified by that; and the Apostle lays the whole stress of our Salvation chiefly upon his Resurrection, *Who is he that condemneth? (saith he) it is Christ that died, yea rather that is risen again.*

But what are we to learn from Christ's Resurrection? Why, sundry, great, and weighty Lessons.

1. As his Death shew'd the Verity of his Manhood, so his Resurrection may assure us of the Truth of his Godhead; for which Reason the Apostle tells us, *that he was declar'd to be the Son of God with Power by his Resurrection from the Dead.*

2. Christ's Death and Resurrection may assure us of the Immortality of the Soul, and the Resurrection of our Bodies. Our

Saviour's Soul existing apart from his Body in *Hades*, shews that ours too may remain in a state of Separation; and the reuniting of Soul and Body again in his Person, may assure us of the like Reunion and Resurrection of ours, for he rose as our Head and Representative. And *as in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive*; for which Reason he is stil'd, *the First-born from the Dead, and the first-fruits of them that sleep*: and we are said to be thereby *born again to a lively hope of an eternal Inheritance reserv'd in Heaven for us*, 1 Pet. 1. 3.

3. Christ's Resurrection affords us matter of great Joy and Rejoicing: his Birth was *glad Tidings of great Joy to all People*, but his Resurrection was much more so; for by the former he came to suffer, by the latter he is gone to triumph; by the first he partook of the Infirmities of our Nature, by the other he has freed us from them, and made us Partakers of his Divine Nature. And sure if any thing can, this is a matter for Joy unspeakable and full of Glory, and therefore we are to *remember that Jesus Christ of the Seed of David was raised from the Dead*, as a matter of great Joy, and a just ground of the firmest Hope, Trust, and Confidence in him.

Lastly, Let us learn to express *the Power of Christ's Resurrection* by rising from the Death of Sin to a *Newness of Life*. God hath *quicken'd us* (saith the Apostle) *together with Christ, that like as he was rais'd by the Glory of the Father, so we should walk in Newness of Life*. He was rais'd to bless us, by turning every one of us from our Iniquities; and we are to be planted in the Likeness of his Resurrection by the renewing of our Minds, and the reforming of our Lives, that we should not henceforth live to our selves, but to him who died and rose again for us. I shall conclude this, as our Apostle does in the close of this Chapter, *Wherefore, my beloved Brethren, be ye stedfast, &c.*

DISCOURSE XIX.

Ephes. 4. 10. *He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all Heavens, that he might fill all things.*

WE have seen the first step of our Blessed Saviour's Exaltation, viz. his coming forth of the Grave, and rising again from the Dead the third Day, the Subject of the fifth Article of our Creed: I come now to the

Sixth, which will lead us to two steps more of his Exaltation, viz. his Ascension into Heaven, and his Sitting at the Right Hand of God; both which are contain'd in those words, *He ascended up into Heaven, and there sitteth at the Right Hand of God the Father Almighty.* I begin at present with the first of them, which is the second step of his Exaltation, to wit, *His Ascension into Heaven.* And because the first Inquiry must be into the Person that is affirm'd to have ascended, our Text in answer to it tells us, that *he who descended into Hell, is the same Person* that is here believ'd to have *ascended up into Heaven, yea far above all Heavens, that he might fill all things.* In treating whereof I must,

First, Explain the Nature, and shew the Truth of his Ascension.

Secondly, I must consider the Time, Place, and Manner of this great Action. And

Lastly, What we are to learn from it. For the

First, By Christ's ascending into Heaven, we are not to understand only a Metaphorical Translation from a low and mean state to a higher and better Condition, which is frequently call'd *ascendi*; nor yet such a figurative Elevation of the Soul, whereby it is said to mount up to Heaven upon the Wings of Prayer and Meditation, for so all Christians may and ought daily to ascend thither: but we understand by it a real and local Translation of the natural Body of Christ from Earth to Heaven, whereby he who was born of the Blessed Virgin, did, in that very Body in which he liv'd, died, and rose again, truly and visibly ascend from these lower Regions, *far above all Heavens*; that is, above the Etherial and Starry Heavens, into the Mansions of Bliss and Immortality.

To

To confirm us in the Belief of this great Action, I must consider it,

1. As it was prefigur'd in Types, and predicted in Prophecies; and after, how both were actually accomplish'd in the Person of our Saviour. For the first,

Enoch's Translation into Heaven was a Type of the Messiah's ascending thither: *Elijah's* being mounted up in a Whirl-wind, and carried into Heaven in a fiery Chariot, was a lively Representation of Christ's being receiv'd up into Glory; only with this difference, that our Saviour needed not the Elevation of a Whirl-wind, or the Conduct of a Chariot, but went up by the sole Influence and Virtue of his Divine Power. *Joseph's* being advanc'd to the highest Dignity and Authority in the King's House, after all his hard usage from his Brethren, was a fore-signification of the Messiah's Advancement to the highest Glory in the Kingdom of Heaven.

Joshua's entring into *Canaan*, and bringing the *Israelites*, after the wearisom Toils and Travels of the Wilderness, into that promised Land, was a Type or Token of the Messiah's entring into Glory, and leading his Followers out of the Troubles of this World into the heavenly *Canaan*.

But more clearly; The High Priest's going once a Year into the Holy of Holies, after he had made an Atonement for the Transgressions of the People, plainly prefigur'd our Lord's ascending into Heaven after the Sacrifice of himself: *By his own Blood* (saith the Apostle) *he entred once into the holy Place, having obtain'd eternal Redemption for us.* And again, *He is entred not into the holy Place made with hands, which are but the Figures of the true, but into Heaven it self,* Heb. 9. 14, 24.

And as this was prefigur'd in Types, so was it predicted in Prophecies. The Psalmist's rhetorical Speech in the 24th Psalm, *Lift up your Heads, O ye Gates, and be ye lift up ye everlasting Doors, and the King of Glory shall come in!* tho literally spoken of the Ark, is yet mystically meant of the Messiah's Entrance into Glory; whom he afterward thus bespeaks, *Thou hast ascended up on high, thou hast led Captivity captive, and receiv'd Gifts for Men,* Psal. 68. 18. meaning, that after his Conquest of Death and Hell, whereby he led captive our Ghostly Enemies, he went triumphantly up into Heaven, where like a King new crown'd he shower'd down the Gifts and Graces of his Spirit on the Sons of Men, Eph. 4. 8. To this some have apply'd that Prophecy of *Micah, The Breaker*

is come up before them, they have broken up and passed thro the Gates, and are gone out by it; and their Kings shall pass before them, and the Lord at the Head of them, Mic. 2. 13. Where, the Breaker, by the Confession of the Jews, is the Title of the Messias; the breaking up and passing thro the Gates, is his breaking the Bonds of Death and passing thro the Gates of the Grave; after which he should lead his Followers to Heaven, himself going before in the Head of them.

But what was thus signified of old in Types and Prophecies, we find amply accomplish'd in the Person of our Saviour: when he had finished the Work that was given him to do, in order to Man's Redemption, and the time of his returning to his Father was come, he visibly ascended up into the highest Heavens; from whence he descended, and in that very body, which he assum'd of the blessed Virgin, quitted these dark Regions here below, and mounted himself to the brightest Mansions of Light and Glory that are above.

Now this being likewise a matter of Fact, depends upon the Testimony of able and faithful Witnesses for the proof of it: and for this we have the Testimony of the Apostles and Disciples, who were Eye-witnesses of it, and beheld him visibly taken up to Heaven. St. Luke tells us, *that while he was talking with them, and blessing of them, he was parted from them, and carry'd up into Heaven, Luke 24. 51. And to the same purpose we are told, Acts 1. 9. When he had spoken to them, they beheld him taken up, till a Cloud receiv'd him out of their sight. They did not see him in the Act of his Resurrection, because that was not necessary, it being sufficient that he shew'd himself alive, after they knew he had been dead; but an Eye-witness was necessary at the Act of his Ascension, because it could not otherwise be prov'd that he ascended, being not to be seen after: and therefore that we might not want sufficient Evidence of this great Truth, he was pleas'd to ascend up in the View of many Witnesses. And the better to strengthen our Faith herein, there was added the Testimony of the Angels, the glorious Inhabitants of Heaven, who because the Eyes of the Apostles could not follow him so far, came down to signify his Arrival thither; for we read that while they were stedfastly looking up to Heaven, two Men in white Apparel stood by, saying, Ye Men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into Heaven? this same Jesus, which you see taken from you into Heaven, shall so come in like manner, as ye see him taken from you into Heaven, Acts 1. 11, 12. And this will lead me in the*

Second

Second place to consider the Circumstances of time, place, manner and end of this great Action.

1. For the time of his Ascension, it was forty Days after his Resurrection from the Dead, as we read, *Acts* 1. 3. He staid so long to confirm his Followers in the Truth of his Resurrection, upon which all their Faith and Hopes depended: for if he had left the World presently after he arose from the dead, Men might have question'd the truth both of his Death and Resurrection; that is, whether he were the same Person that died on the Cross, and whether he were indeed risen: he might have been taken only for an Apparition, that appear'd for a while, and then vanish'd away; and by this means the World had been left in great doubts and uncertainty about this great Article, on which the Truth of all the Christian Religion depends: and therefore our Saviour thought fit to stay sometime to give them full Satisfaction in so weighty a matter. This was the Reason of his many and frequent appearances to his Disciples during that time, *to whom he shew'd himself alive after his Passion by many infallible Proofs, being seen of them forty Days, and speaking to them the things pertaining to the Kingdom of God; laying the Foundation of the Christian Church, which he had purchas'd with his own Blood, and directing them how and what they should build thereupon.*

And having fully confirm'd them in these great Truths, he prepares them for his departure, and to arm them against that Fear and Sorrow which he knew the News of it would occasion; to which end, he first breaks it to them himself, letting them know, that the *time of his going to his Father was at hand*; and bidding *Mary go unto his Brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father.* And finding them much dejected upon the first report of it, he endeavours to comfort them by suggesting sundry Arguments of Consolation; telling them, that *'twas expedient for them that he should go away; that in his Father's House were many Mansions; that his going before was to be their Harbinger, to prepare a place for them; and that he would shortly come again and take them to himself: in the mean time he would not leave them comfortless, but would send them a Comforter to abide with them, and supply all the defects of his Absence.*

And having thus eas'd their Minds, and prepar'd them for his going away, he bids them to go to *Jerusalem*, where he would farther impart his Mind, and take his leave of them. And this will lead us,

2. To

2. To the Place of his Ascension. When the Apostles were come to *Jerusalem*, our Saviour met them, and there deliver'd his last Mind and Message to them; which was to let them know, that they were to be his Witnesses to the World, to preach and propagate his Doctrine in all Parts and Corners of it: and to that end he would in a few days *send them the Holy Ghost, and endow them with Power from on High*, sufficient to overcome all Difficulties, and to carry them with Honour and Success through the Work in which he had engag'd them.

And having left his last Mind and Will with them, he leads them forth out of the City as far as *Bethany*, which is about a Mile distant from *Jerusalem*; where being come, he takes them up on the adjoining Hill, call'd the Mount of *Olives*; and being arriv'd at the Top of it, he tells them, that he was now going to his Father: And as the High-Priest was wont to lift up his Hand and bless the People, as he was going into the Holy place; so did the Son of God there give his Followers his solemn and final Benediction. And while he was thus blessing them, he was of a sudden parted from them, and mounted up slowly by degrees, so as they might for some time follow him with their Eyes, and discern his Motion; till being come up at some considerable height, a Cloud received him out of their sight, and hinder'd their Eyes from following or discerning him any farther. Thus did our Blessed Saviour leave this World without any alteration of his Humanity, ascending in that visible and bodily Shape, that the Eyes of his Followers plainly beheld him, and became competent Witnesses of the reality of his Ascent.

But while the Disciples were thus gazing and fixing their Eyes upon him, as he was mounting upward, we may well think what a Conflict they felt within them, between the two different Passions of Joy and Sorrow; Sorrow, for that their Lord was going from them; and Joy, to see him thus ascending in Triumph, and to behold so glorious an Act of his Divine Power and Majesty.

When they had quite lost the sight of him, St. Luke tells us, *they all fell down and worship'd him*; after which *they return'd to Jerusalem with great Joy, and were continually in the Temple blessing and praising of God*, Luke 24. 52, 53. Their Faith had now overcome their Fears; and they who before could not hear the News of his departure without Tears and Grief, could now rejoice and adore him being gone, being fully satisfy'd of his ten-

der Love and Care of them, and likewise of his Ability and Readiness to help them.

And how should we follow our Lord in our Contemplations to the Regions above! We may well imagine, tho we cannot express that Joy, unspeakable and full of Glory, with which he was receiv'd into those Heavenly Mansions; how God the Father welcom'd his Beloved Son, after so full an Accomplishment of the Work which he gave him to do: How the Holy Angels, who worship'd him under all the meanness and frailties of his Incarnation, did now pay their humble and devout Adorations upon his triumphant Return unto Glory. How overjoy'd (think you) were all the blest Inhabitants of Heaven to see their dearest Lord return to them, whom they lov'd above all things, whom they were now to enjoy for ever, and never more to lose the Honour and Happiness of his Presence!

These are things we may reasonably conceive and meditate upon, tho we can never comprehend them, till we come to bear a part with them in those eternal Praises and Hallelujahs.

But what were the Ends and Effects of his Ascension? Why, these relate partly to himself, and partly to his Followers.

For himself, He thus visibly ascended for the manifestation of his Glory, and to convince the World of the Divinity of his Person. His rising indeed from Death to Life shew'd a Divine Power, but his mounting from Earth to Heaven illustrated it much more; by this he resum'd the Glory he had before he descended, and was reinstated in all that Honour he had before the Foundation of the World. *I have glorified thee on Earth (says he) I have finish'd the Work thou gavest me to do: And now, O Father, glorify me with thine own self, with the Glory I had with thee before the World began,* John 17. 4, 5. At this time he receiv'd the Reward of his Sufferings, and was invested in all the Privileges of a Mediator, being hereby solemnly declar'd both Lord and Christ; as a King, governing and protecting his Church; as a Priest, interceding for it; as a Prophet, instructing it by his Holy Spirit.

As for us, He is ascended as our Harbinger, to provide for our Reception into those Heavenly Mansions; for so himself told his Disciples, *I go to prepare a Place for you, and will receive you to my self, that where I am there you may be also.*

Again,

Again, He is ascended as our Advocate, to appear for us, and plead our Cause in the Court of Heaven: So the Apostle tells us, *He is enter'd into Heaven it self, there to appear in the Presence of God for us*, Heb. 9. 24. Lastly, He went away to send us a Comforter in the mean time: *If I go not away (says he) the Comforter will not come; but if I depart, I will send him unto you*. Thus having shew'd the principal Circumstances relating to our Blessed Saviour's Ascension, let us,

Lastly, See what Use we are to make of it. And,

1. Christ's Ascension may abundantly confirm our Faith and Hope in him. We cannot doubt his being the Son of God, and the Saviour of Mankind, after such an illustrious Instance of his Divine Power: We may from hence rest satisfy'd, that he can and will do all that he hath promis'd, and that our Necessities call for: *This Hope we have as an Anchor of the Soul, both sure and stedfast; since our Forerunner is enter'd within the Veil, and made an High Priest for ever after the Order of Melchisedeck*. 2. Christ's Ascension should teach us to be still honouring, worshipping and adoring him: We find the Apostles did so, who upon Christ's leaving them, repair'd to the Temple, and were there continually blessing and praising God, Luke 24. 3. Christ's Ascension into Heaven may assure us of our ascending after him; for he is ascended as our Head and Representative, and will shortly have his whole Body with him: He is stiled our Harbinger and Forerunner, gone a little before to prepare our way, having promis'd to come again, and receive us to himself, and so shall we be ever with the Lord. 4. Christ's Ascension should raise our Hearts and Affections to things above; his being gone from this lower World to the Regions above, should make us lift up our Hearts and Desires to him, and mount after him upon the Wings of Prayer and Meditation. We should scorn to be taken up with any thing here below, when our Saviour is above; or be groveling upon Earth, when we should be thinking and preparing for Heaven. The Patriarchs look'd upon themselves but as *Pilgrims and Strangers upon Earth, and were ever seeking another and better Country*: How much more ought we to do so, when our Saviour hath not only discover'd and purchas'd this Country, but is gone before to take possession of it for us? This should teach us to set our Affections on things Above, and not on things on the Earth, to rise and ascend with Christ, that where our Treasure is, there our Hearts may be also.

DISCOURSE XX.

Mark 16. 19. Latter part. *And sat on the right Hand of God.*

FROM the Second Step of our Blessed Saviour's Exaltation, *viz.* his Ascension into Heaven ; I proceed to the Third, to wit, *his Session at the right Hand of God* ; which both our Text and our Creed teach us stedfastly to believe. In discoursing whereof it will be necessary,

First, To explain the true sense and meaning of it.

Secondly, To shew that 'twas foretold and promis'd of the Messiah, that after the finishing the Work of Man's Redemption, he should sit down at the right Hand of God.

Thirdly, That our Blessed Saviour is accordingly thus set down at the right Hand of the Majesty on High.

Fourthly, I am to consider the great Benefits and Privileges that accrue thereby unto Mankind. And,

Lastly, What Influence the Belief of it ought to have upon our Practice.

For the Explication of it, we must note, That God being a Spirit, must not be suppos'd to have any material or corporeal Parts, and consequently not to have either a right Hand or a left ; but we are to understand it figuratively, as spoken after the manner of Men : for the Hand being the Instrument of Power, by which most of our Actions - natural and artificial are perform'd ; therefore the Power by which God is said to act or do any thing, is commonly express'd by the Hand of God. And because the Right Hand, by being more generally us'd than the Left, acquires a greater strength and activity ; therefore the infinite Strength and Power of God is frequently set forth and signify'd by the Right Hand of God. Moreover,

The right Hand is among Men esteem'd the place of greatest Honour and Dignity ; whence *Solomon*, sitting on his Throne, is said, in honour to his Mother, to *seat her at his right Hand*, 1 Kings 2. 19. And therefore the Right Hand of God is us'd to signify the highest Honour and Dignity in his Presence.

Again,

Again, Because Gifts are generally given and receiv'd by the Hands of Men ; therefore the Right Hand of God is made to signify his Bounty, and the Blessedness of such as partake of it ; according to that of the Psalmist, *In thy Presence is fulness of Joy, and at thy right Hand are Pleasures for evermore.* So that by the Right Hand of God here, we are to understand Power, Honour, Pleasure, and everlasting Happiness.

Furthermore, by Christ's *Session* at the right Hand of God, we are not to understand any one determinate Posture of Body, much less that inclining Posture which we call *sitting* : for we find him describ'd in Scripture in other and different Postures ; St. Stephen looking up stedfastly to Heaven, saw Jesus standing at the right Hand of God, Acts 7. 56. and St. John represents him as lying in his Father's Bosom. But by Sitting here we are to understand his being, inhabiting, and possessing for ever this superlative Degree of Glory. And because Sitting is a Posture of Rest, Honour, Command, and Continuance ; therefore Christ's sitting at the right Hand of God, implies his eternal and undisturb'd enjoyment of the highest Honour, Power and Happiness with God in the highest Heavens. From whence I proceed to shew,

Secondly, That this was foretold of the Messiah, and reveal'd to the Prophets in the Old Testament concerning him.

Joseph's being taken from Prison, and made the Ruler of Pharaoh's House, and thereby advanc'd to the highest Power and Dignity in his Kingdom, was a Type of the Messiah's Advancement to the highest Honour and Power in the Kingdom of Heaven. David speaking prophetically of the Messiah, says, *The Lord said to my Lord, Sit thou at my right Hand till I have made thine Enemies thy Footstool*, Psal. 110. 1. This Prophecy our Saviour, in his reasoning with the Pharisees, applies to himself, shewing it could not be meant of the Son of David, but of the Son of God ; because David in Spirit call'd him Lord, which he would not have done if he had been only his Son. Yea so assured was he of this Honour, that he told the chief Priests and Elders before his Death, *Hereafter shall the Son of Man sit at the right Hand of the Power of God*, Luke 22. 59.

Thirdly, But what was thus prophetically foretold of the Messiah, was exactly fulfil'd in the Person of Christ, who after he was receiv'd up into Heaven, sat down at the right Hand of God. Yea, we find

find all the Prophecies concerning the Glorious and Eternal Kingdom of the Messiah, and his exercising Regal Power and Authority over his Church, apply'd to and accomplish'd in him at this his solemn Session at God's right Hand. Then was that of the Psalmist fulfil'd, *Behold, I have set my King upon my Holy Hill of Zion*: Then was it truly said to him, *Thy Throne, O God, is for ever and ever, a Scepter of Righteousness is the Scepter of thy Kingdom*. And the Vision of Daniel came to pass, who saw one coming in the Clouds of Heaven to the antient of Days, and was brought near before him; and there was given unto him Dominion and Glory, and a Kingdom, that all People, Nations and Languages should serve him; whose Dominion is everlasting, and his Kingdom such as shall not be destroy'd, Dan. 7. 13, 14. This was an Honour never promis'd or given to any but the Son of God; for tho the Angels are said to stand about the Throne of God, yet it was never said to any of them in this glorious manner, *Sit thou at my right Hand, till I make thine Enemies thy Footstool*. And this will lead me in the

Fourth place, To consider the great Benefits and Privileges that accrue to us hereby, and they are chiefly two:

1. A compleat Victory obtain'd over all our Enemies. And,
2. His powerful Intercession for us at God's right Hand.

1. I say, Christ, by his sitting at the right Hand of God, hath obtain'd for us a compleat Victory over his and our Enemies: So the Apostle assures us, Heb. 10. 12, 13. *He is set down at the right Hand of God, from henceforth expecting till all his Enemies be made his footstool*. And he elsewhere tells us, *That he must reign, till he hath put all his Enemies under his Feet*: where the Apostle, in both those Expressions, of putting his Enemies under his Feet, and making them his Footstool, alludes to the antient Custom of the Eastern Conquerors, who were wont to tread upon the Necks of their subdued Enemies. So we read of Joshua, who having made five Kings his Prisoners, said unto the Men that went with him, *Come near, and put your Feet upon the Necks of them*, Josh. 10. 4. which in that, as in the present Case, was a token of a compleat Conquest and Subjugation of all their Enemies.

Now the Enemies subdued unto Christ by this means, are Temporal and Spiritual; of the first sort are both Jews and Gentiles. The former, for their obstinate refusal of Christ, were scatter'd up and down, and remain to this day dispersed over the face of the Earth: The latter, by yielding to him, are receiv'd into

into the Bosom of his Church, and partake of the Benefits of his Merits and Satisfaction. The Spiritual Enemies he hath hereby conquer'd for us, are Sin, Satan, Death and Hell; all which, by his sitting at the right Hand of God, he hath made his Footstool, and in a great measure too put under our Feet.

He conquer'd Sin by the Power of his Grace, and hath so weaken'd the Dominion of it, that if we consent not to it, *it shall no longer reign in our mortal Bodies.*

He vanquish'd Satan by the Triumphs of his Cross, in which he *spoil'd Principalities and Powers, and the Rulers of the Darknes of this World,* and thereby rescu'd us from the Snares and Wiles of the Devil.

He destroy'd Death by the Power of his Resurrection, opening thereby the Gates of the Grave, and rising thence first Himself as our Head, and then drawing us his Members after him. *The last Enemy* (says the Apostle) *which shall be destroy'd, is Death;* which he did by *destroying him that had the Power of Death, which is the Devil;* and thereby freed his Followers from all the Powers of Hell and Darknes.

This is in short the Victory obtain'd for us by Jesus Christ over his and our Enemies, of which we have abundant assurance by his ascending up into Heaven, and his sitting down at the right Hand of the Majesty on high; which Victory, tho begun, and in some measure confer'd on us here, yet will not be compleated till his second Coming, and the time of the restitution of all things. In the mean time let us consider,

2. Another great Privilege we enjoy by his sitting at the right Hand of God; and that is, his interceding and pleading our Cause in Heaven for us: and this he doth not by any verbal or vocal Address, not by formal Pleas or Supplications; but by presenting himself, and *appearing in the presence of God for us,* shewing his Merits for our Discharge, and exhibiting the Virtue of his Sacrifice, that we may obtain Grace and Help in time of need. For as the High Priest under the Law went into the *Holy of Holies* with the Blood of Expiation, and by sprinkling and presenting it *before the Mercy Seat,* obtain'd Mercy and Pardon for the Sins of the People, *Levit. 16.* even so our High Priest *is entred into Heaven* with the Blood of his Sacrifice, and presenting it at God's right Hand, intercedes in our behalf, and procures Mercy for us. So the Apostle assures us, *He ever liveth to make Intercession for us,* Heb. 7. 25. And if any Man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous, 1 John 2. 1.

Now.

Now his Intercession must be very powerful, and cannot but prevail and succeed for us; for being still near at hand, and so highly exalted at God's right Hand, he is ever ready to present our Petitions, and to receive Returns, and is always heard in what he asks. But beside his nearness and dearness to his Father, he pleads not only the Father's Promise, but his own Purchase; and asks no more than his Merits claim for us, which must make his Intercession prevalent beyond all Expressions: He hath all Power given him both in Heaven and Earth, and can grant what he pleases: *If ye ask the Father any thing (says he) in my Name, I will do it, that the Father may be glorify'd in the Son,* John 14. 13, 14.

But may we move him then for any thing we please, and are we sure to speed in whatever we ask?

Yes, in all that is proper for us to ask, and fit for us to receive; all that God hath promis'd, and our Saviour purchas'd, both which extend to all that is necessary and convenient for us. We may not indeed move for any thing that tends to the dishonour of God, or the prejudice of our own Souls, as some things we are fond of too often do; for these things being contrary both to his Nature and Will, and inconsistent with the Goodness as well as the Glory of God, are not the proper Matter of our Requests, and the Mercy would not be so great in the Grant, as in the Denial. Our Saviour in acting as our Intercessor, hath a due regard both to the Honour of his Father, and the Happiness of his Followers, and therefore will not appear in any thing that is prejudicial to either: But for all the Mercies and Blessings of the New Covenant, all the Benefits promis'd by the Father, and purchas'd by the Son, these being all for our Good and God's Glory, he allows us to ask, and is ever ready and willing to bestow.

But for whom doth Christ now intercede at God's Right Hand? Have all Men a share and interest in his Intercession?

No, as the Merits of his Death, so the Mercies of his Intercession appertain only to his own People; he neither shed his Blood here on Earth, nor shews it now in Heaven for wicked and obdurate Persons, who *continue in Sin that Grace may abound*. No, 'tis only the Penitent, Faithful, and returning Sinners, whose Cause our Saviour pleads at the Tribunal of Heaven, and there procures Mercy and Pardon for them; he leaves obstinate and obdurate Offenders to themselves, who must therefore perish thro their own Impenitence: *I pray not (says he) for the World, but for them which*

thou hast given me out of the World, that they all may be one, and that where I am, there they may be also, John 17. He intercedes not for careless and presumptuous Persons, who think and say that all is done for them, and will be at no pains to work out their own Salvation; that depend only upon absolute Promises, and talk of nothing but overpowering and irresistible Grace, without using their own Indeavours, or observing the Conditions of the New Covenant; these are left to satisfy and help themselves as well as they can, and if they cannot, justly miscarry by their own negligence, for Christ no where offers Pardon but to the Penitent, nor saving Grace but to the sincere and sound Believer.

Thus we see both the Sense and Certainty of Christ's Session at the right Hand of God, together with the great Benefits and Privileges that accrue to his Followers by it.

It remains that we proceed to the Use we are to make of it.

And,

1. From Christ's being exalted and seated in Heaven, we may learn the Error of the Doctrine of Transubstantiation: for Christ's natural Body having all the Properties of a Body as ours have, as appears by his appealing to the Senses of his Disciples about it, it must be circumscrib'd and confin'd to a Place as ours are; and consequently if it be locally ascended into Heaven, it cannot, without a local Descent from thence, be corporally present here on Earth, and much less in many thousand Places at once: and if *the Heavens must contain him till the time of the Restitution of all things,* 'tis absurd to imagine that the Priest, by the powerful Charm of a few words, should be able to fetch him thence at pleasure.

2. From Christ's being exalted to the highest Honour and Power at God's right Hand, we may learn to pay the greatest Homage, Reverence and Subjection to him; for God hath thus *highly exalted him, that at the Name of Jesus every Knee should bow, and every Tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the Glory of God the Father, Phil. 2. 9, 10, 11.* Subject we must be to him, for *he must reign till he hath put all his Enemies under his Feet*; and if we do not submit to his Kingdom of Grace here, in order to follow him to his Kingdom of Glory hereafter, we shall be forc'd at last to stoop to the Kingdom of his Power, when *he will bruise those with a Rod of Iron that would not submit to his Golden Scepter*; and cause those *his Enemies, that would not that he should reign over them, to be brought forth and slain before him.*

M m

3. From

3. From Christ's making all his and our Enemies his Footstool, by sitting at the right Hand of God, we may learn to rejoice in and congratulate the Happiness of the Victory, triumphing in the words of the Apostle; *O Death, where is thy Sting? O Grave, where is thy Victory? But thanks be to God, who giveth us the Victory thro our Lord Jesus Christ.* We may challenge Sin and Satan, Death and Hell, to do their worst, and say with the Apostle, *Who shall lay any thing to the Charge of God's Elect? it is Christ that died, yea rather that is risen again, and set down at the right Hand of God;* which is matter of the greatest Joy and Exultation.

4. From Christ's subduing all Enemies under his Feet, let us learn to put our Trust in him in the greatest Exigencies; for *he is faithful that hath promis'd:* and being advanc'd to so high a Dignity at God's right Hand, is both able and willing to help us. Let us therefore *commit our selves to him in well-doing,* without giving way to any anxious and distrustful Fears, and much less betaking our selves to any sinister and indirect ways for our own safety, knowing that *if we suffer with him here, we shall hereafter reign with him in Glory.* In the mean time let us look unto Jesus the Author and Finisher of our Faith, who for the Joy that was set before him, *endur'd the Cross, and despis'd the Shame, and is now set down at the right Hand of the Majesty on high, lest we be weary and faint in our Minds.*

5. From Christ's interceding for us at God's right Hand, let us learn to come boldly to the Throne of Grace, that we may obtain Mercy, and find Grace to help in time of need; let us lift up holy Hands without Wrath and Doubting, having so good a Friend and Advocate to plead for us in the Court of Heaven.

6. Let us learn hence to rely upon his Intercession, without seeking to any other Mediators; for *there is one Mediator between God and Men, the Man Christ Jesus.* He hath all Power in Heaven and Earth; and consequently as there can be no need, so neither have we any Warrant to have recourse to any other.

Lastly, Christ having advanc'd our Nature to so high a Dignity at God's right Hand, let us learn the greatest Purity, and not make the *Members of Christ to become the Members of a Harlot;* but rather being risen with Christ, let us seek those things that are above, where Christ sitteth at the right Hand of God.

DISCOURSE XXI.

2 Tim. 4. part of the 1st Verse. *The Lord Jesus Christ shall judg the Quick and the Dead, at his Appearing and his Kingdom.*

WE have seen our Blessed Saviour ascended up into Heaven, and there seated at the right hand of God: We are now to behold him coming from thence in Power and great Glory, to exercise the last Act of his Regal Power, which is the highest step of his Exaltation: And this is contain'd in the

Next Article of our Creed, in these words, *From thence he shall come to judg the Quick and the Dead.* Where we have,

First, Our Saviour's second coming from Heaven; *from thence he shall come*, exprefs'd in the Text by *his appearing in his Kingdom.*

Secondly, The End and Design of it, which is *to judg the World.*

Thirdly, The Persons that are to be judged, and they are *the Quick and the Dead.*

The *First* thing we here profess to believe, is Christ's Second Coming; *from thence he shall come*: And of this we have many clear and exprefs Revelations in Holy Scripture; *Enoch the seventh from Adam prophesied of it, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his Angels, Jude 14. Daniel, in his Vision, saw one like the Son of Man coming in the Clouds of Heaven, Dan. 7. 13, 14.* His first coming was in great Humility, cloth'd in all the circumstances of Meanness and Misery; but his second coming will be in Power and great Glory, attended with a numerous Train of Angels, and appearing in his Kingdom with Majesty and Splendor, suitable to the Greatness of his Person, and the Dignity of his Errand: For so we read, *Matth. 25. The Son of Man shall come in the Glory of his Father with his Holy Angels.* Christ himself told his Disciples more than once, *I go away and come again unto you*: And 'twas often in their Mouths, *He that shall come, will come, and will not tarry.* The Angels told the Men of Galilee, *That same*

Jesus which they saw taken up to Heaven, should come again in like manner as they had seen him taken up, Acts 1. 11. He was taken up in a Cloud, and in that bright Vehicle was carried up into Heaven; and we are told he shall come from thence in the Clouds of Heaven; thus in a literal sense making the Clouds his Chariot, and flying upon the Wings of the Wind. At which time, the Saints that sleep in the Dust, shall awake and be caught up to meet the Lord in the Air, congratulating his Return from the higher Regions, and so shall they ever be with the Lord, as we read in 1 Thess. 4. 14, &c.

But Secondly, What is the End of his second coming? why, this we are here and in sundry Places of Holy Scripture told, is to judg the World: for *God has appointed a day (saith the Apostle) in which he will judg the World in Righteousness, by that Man whom he has ordain'd, of which he has given Assurance by raising him from the dead, Acts 17. 31. And We must all appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ, to receive according to the things done in the Body, whether it be good or evil, 2 Cor. 5. 10.*

But is there any other Warrant or Evidence of such a Day beside Divine Revelation? Yes, Reason it self, by observing the Course of Affairs in this Life, may easily gather and inform us of a Reckoning. For

1. Reason wills that a Discrimination be made between good and bad Men, which in this Life, by reason of the Disguises of Hypocrisy, and the promiscuous Events of things, are not known or discern'd from one another. And therefore as the Shepherd divides the Sheep from the Goats; and as the Tares and the Wheat, which for a while grow together, will be separated at the Harvest: so at the great Harvest of the World, good Men will be known and separated from the bad, and a Distinction made between them that fear God, and such as fear him not. Again,

2. Justice it self requires that Vertue and Goodness be rewarded, and that Vice and Wickedness be punish'd: Now because this is not done in this World, where the wicked prosper and good Men are afflicted, we may very well conclude there will be a future Reckoning, when both these will be set right. The necessity of reversing the Errors and unjust Sentences of this World, where Innocency is oft-times oppress'd, and Vice and Wickedness triumph, shews that God will again judg the Earth, and

and that the All-wise just Judg of the Earth will do every one Right.

3. The Acts of our own Conscience may assure us of an approaching Judgment; for that commends us when we do well, and condemns us when we do otherwise, which are the present Notices and Preparations for a future Trial: yea, Conscience not only approves our good Actions, but creates a Confidence and Chearfulness in doing of them, which shews that they can abide the Trial; whereas 'tis still accusing and troubling us after we have done any thing that is evil, filling us with Terror and fearful Expectations, which are the fore-bodings of a future Judgment, and signify that Conscience is bound over as a Witness, to give Testimony for or against us at that Day. To this purpose is that of the Apostle, *If our Hearts condemn us not, then have we Confidence before God; but if our Hearts condemn us, God is greater than our Hearts, and knoweth all things.*

If then a future Judgment be so certain and unavoidable, 'twill be requisite to know something of the Proceedings of that Day.

For the Judg, that we are told is the Son of God, and the Saviour of the World: *For the Father judgeth no Man, but has committed all Judgment to the Son,* John 5. 22. And when God is said to judg the World, 'tis by that Man whom he has ordain'd, of which he has given Assurance, by raising him from the dead: This Honour is confer'd on him as a Reward of his Sufferings; for he having obtain'd Eternal Redemption for us, 'tis fit he should dispose of it on his own Terms, and sentence those that refuse them: and 'tis a high Vindication of his Honour to be made the Judg of all the World, who was unjustly judg'd by it.

For the Manner of it, the Apostle tells us, that *the Lord himself shall descend from Heaven with a Shout, with the Voice of the Archangel, and the Trump of God, and the dead in Christ shall arise,* 1. Thess. 4. 16. At his coming, the Trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be rais'd incorruptible; the Inhabitants of the Grave shall come forth, and appear before his Judgment Seat.

For the Place, the same Apostle tells us, that his Judgment Seat will be in the Air; for when the dead are rais'd, they shall (saith he) *be caught up in the Clouds to meet the Lord in the Air,* 1. Thess. 4. 17. There where the Devil and his Angels had tyranniz'd, who is therefore stil'd the Prince of the Power of the Air; will Christ erect his Throne, and summon them and all the Inhabitants of the Earth to appear before him, to undergo their Trial, and receive their Doom.

For

For the Time, we are told it will be at the *End of the World*; all the time before is for the proving and preparing Persons for this Season; in which Christ gives them Laws and Precepts to walk by, together with sufficient Means, Opportunities and Encouragements to observe them: and according as they have observ'd or omitted these things, will their Reward or Punishment be. There is a Day appointed wherein these things will be heard and look'd into: and this is call'd sometimes *the Last Day*, sometimes *the Day of the Lord*, sometimes *the Great Day*, or *the Day of Judgment*; which must not be understood of the precise time of a Day, or the Space of twenty four Hours, but of such a space of time as is requisite for the compleating so great a Transaction. And this Day, tho known and determin'd by God, is yet for wise Reasons conceal'd from us; for *of that Day and Hour knoweth no Man, no not the Angels in Heaven, nor the Son himself, as Man, but the Father only*. To keep us still upon our Watch, we are told its coming will be sudden and unexpected, and even surprise us as *a Thief in the Night, and Travel upon a Woman with Child*, 1 Thess. 5. 2, 3.

For the Matter of this Judgment, or the Things to be enquir'd into, they are *all things done in the Flesh, whether they be good or whether they be evil*; that is, all things committed to us, or committed by us, are to be accounted for at that Day.

Of the first sort are all the Talents of Time, Wealth, Learning, Honour or Power, with all other Advantages and Opportunities of doing good that have been intrusted with us; where strict Inquiry will be made into the Use and Improvement of these Talents, according to the Measure and Quality of those we have receiv'd: And if it shall be found that we have employ'd and improv'd them well to the Glory of God, and the Good of our selves and others, we shall find the Reward of *good and faithful Servants, to enter into the Joy of our Lord*. If it appear otherwise, that we have us'd them only to the Dishonour of our Master, and the Detriment of Mankind, we shall receive the Doom of *wicked and slothful Servants, to be bound Hand and Foot, and cast into outer Darkness*.

Of the latter sort are all things done by us, or proceeding from us, such are our Thoughts, Words, and Actions; all which will come into the Scrutiny and Reckoning of that Day.

As for our Thoughts, 'tis proverbial among Men to say that they are free, and indeed so they are from any human Control
or

or Cognizance; but they are not so from the Omniscience of God, who will bring into Judgment every secret thing, whether it be good or evil, Eccl. 12. 14. His Laws reach the inner Man; and when he cometh, he will bring to light all the hidden things of Darkness, and make manifest the Counsels of the Heart.

For our Words, they too do not vanish into Air, or pass away with the Breath that utters them, but are all recorded, and will be rehears'd again at the Day of Reckoning: for of every idle word that a Man speaketh, that is, all such as tend to the Dishonour of God, or defaming our Neighbours, he shall give an Account at the last Day; for by our Words we shall be justify'd, and by our Words we shall be condemn'd, Mat. 12. 36, 37.

For our Actions, they likewise will be narrowly scan'd and review'd at this Bar; our Omissions of Good, and Commissions of Evil, will be publicly laid open, and every one shall receive according as he has done in the Body, whether it be good or evil, 2 Cor. 5. 10. and elsewhere, the dead shall be judg'd, every Man according to his Works, Rev. 20. 13.

But by what Law or Rule are we to be judg'd at that Day? Why, the Gospel is the Rule which all Christians shall be try'd and judg'd by; so God the Father declares, that *He will judg all Men by Jesus Christ, according to the Gospel*, Rom. 2. 16. and God the Son declares the same, *The Word that I have spoken, the same shall judg you at the last Day*, Joh. 12. 48. He will not keep us up to the Rigor and Extremity of the first Law, or condemn us for any involuntary Failings; but will graciously allow us all the Favour and Mitigations of the Gospel. Sincerity shall be accepted for Integrity, and hearty Desires and Endeavours, tho attended with some Infirmities, shall be taken for compleat Obedience; we shall be judg'd by that Law of Liberty that gives all Allowances to human Frailty, and in many Cases accepts the Will for the Deed. Our merciful Saviour will not judg us arbitrarily, or condemn us for things no where forbidden, for *where there is no Law there is no Transgression*; and therefore we need not entertain any vain Fears and Scruples about Forms of Prayer, kneeling, standing, or other innocent and indifferent Rites of God's Worship; which being forbidden by no Law, will never come into the Account of the last Day; tho a too stiff Refusal of them, when enjoin'd by lawful Authority, may.

But what sort of Evidence or Witnesses will be admitted in this Judgment? Why, as to this, there will be little or no use

or need of any; for all our Thoughts, Words, and Actions are perfectly register'd in the Books of God's Omniscience, and will be expos'd to the publick View of Angels and Men: for so St. John, in the Vision of this Day, *Saw the Books open'd, and the Dead were judg'd from the Things written in the Books, according to their Works, Revel. 20. 12.* Beside, every Man's Conscience will be ready to give Testimony for or against him, and supply the Place of a thousand Witnesses: and if that should prove forgetful or defective, *God is greater than our Hearts, and knoweth all things.*

But what will be the Issue and Result of this great and solemn Judgment? Why, after a full and fair Hearing or Trial of every one's Cause, Sentence will pass upon each of them according to their Works: Before which the great Judg of the World will make a publick Discrimination between good Men and the bad, dividing the one from the other, *as a Shepherd divideth the Sheep from the Goats, setting the one at his right Hand, and the other at his left.* And having made this publick Distinction and Separation, turning to those on his right Hand, he will pronounce that glorious and ravishing Sentence of Absolution, *Come ye blessed Children of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepar'd for you from the Foundation of the World;* every Word whereof will fill them with Extasys of Joy, which will not only transport, but abide with them for ever. After which, turning to those on the left Hand, he will pass upon them that dreadful and heart-breaking Sentence of Condemnation, *Depart from me ye cursed into everlasting Fire, prepar'd for the Devil and his Angels:* where every Word will overwhelm them with Grief, and fill them with endless Horror and Despair. Thus having shew'd both the Certainty and the Circumstances of a future Judgment, I proceed,

Thirdly, To the Persons that are to be judg'd, and that both our Text and Creed tell us, are *The Quick and the Dead:* where, by the Quick we are to understand those that shall be found alive at Christ's coming to Judgment; for the Apostle speaks of some that will *be alive and remain to the coming of the Lord,* 1 Thess. 4. 15, 17. and of these he speaks elsewhere, *Behold, I shew you a Mystery, we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be chang'd, in a moment, in the twinkling of an Eye, at the last Trump:* meaning, that some will be found alive at Christ's coming to judg the World, who shall not undergo a proper Death by any actual
Sepa-

Separation of Soul and Body: but yet at the sounding of the last Trump they shall undergo a Change, after which they *shall be caught up in the Clouds to meet the Lord in the Air*; and they that shall be thus chang'd and translated, are the Persons here meant by the Quick.

By the Dead, we are to understand all that depart this Life before that time, and are laid up in the Repositories of the Grave: these too, when the Trumpet shall sound, *shall hear his Voice, and come forth; they that have done well, to the Resurrection of Life; and they that have done evil, to the Resurrection of Damnation*, John 5. 28, 29.

In a word; *All Men*, good and bad, living and dead, *must appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ*: But every one in their own order. *The dead in Christ shall rise first*, and having receiv'd the blessed Sentence, they *shall sit upon the Throne, and judge the twelve Tribes of Israel*: meaning, they shall be Assessors with Christ in judging the wicked, and be Approvers of his just and righteous Sentence.

And when this last Act of his Regal Power in judging the World is over, *then shall he deliver up the Kingdom to God the Father*; that is, he shall surrender up his Delegated Mediatorial Kingdom, when the Design of it is compleated, and shall reign for ever with his Father in the Kingdom of Heaven.

Thus having seen the several Acts of this general and grand Assizes, let us lastly see what we may learn from them.

And 1. From the Certainty of a Day of Judgment, let us learn frequently to think of and prepare for it. This should keep us close to our Duty and constant to our Watch, that this Day may not surprize or find us unprovided; since such weighty Things depend upon it, no less than our eternal Woe or Weal: *What manner of Persons ought we to be in all holy Conversation and Godliness, looking for, and hastning to the coming of our Lord?*

2. Christ's being the Judg, may afford Matter of the greatest Joy, Hope, and Consolation to all good Men; for their Saviour being their Judg, they may rest assur'd of finding Mercy and all favourable Allowances at that Day: and this affords no less Dread and Terror to all wicked Men, who must be judg'd by him whom they have despis'd and crucify'd, and therefore can expect nothing but strict Justice, and the Revelation of Wrath.

3. The Consideration of a future Judgment may rectify our Mistakes about the Afflictions of good, and the Prosperity of bad

Men; and may keep us from ailing at the one, and envying at the other: for that Day will set all these Matters right, when good Men, by Afflictions, will be found fitted for a Crown; and bad Men, by Prosperity, only fatten'd for the Slaughter.

4. If we must all stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ, then let us *judg nothing before the time, until the Lord come*: To judg or censure our Brother, is to forestal the Day of Judgment; and *Who art thou that judgest another? to his own Master he stands or falls.*

DISCOURSE XXII.

ACTS 2. 4. *And they were all fill'd with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other Tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.*

HAVING finish'd the Explication of those Articles of the Creed, that refer to the two first Persons in the Blessed Trinity; I proceed to those which relate to the Third, of which the

First is contain'd in these Words, *I believe in the Holy Ghost.*
For the better Explication whereof, I must shew,

First, Whom we are to understand here by the Holy Ghost.
And,
Secondly, What we are here taught to believe of him.

For the *First*, By the Holy Ghost here, we are to understand the third Person in the ever-blessed Trinity, call'd here by the Name of *Ghost*, which in the *Saxon* Tongue signifies the same with Spirit; and Holy Ghost, because beside his essential Holiness which he has in common with the Father, and the Son, his Office is to work Holiness in the Hearts of God's People: For as Creation is particularly ascrib'd to the Father, and Redemption to the Son; so is Sanctification made the peculiar Work of the Holy Ghost. Hence we are said to be sav'd or sanctify'd, by the *washing of Regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost*, Tit. 3. 5. and elsewhere, that *our Souls are purify'd thro the Spirit,*

Spirit, 1 Pet. 1. 22. Now this Holy Ghost is here plainly suppos'd to be both a Person, and likewise a Person distinct from the Father and the Son, from both which he is also said to proceed.

That he is a Person, is to be believ'd against the Heresy of *Sabellius* of old, and *Socinus* of latter Days, who affirm'd the Holy Ghost to be only an Accident; that is, a Power, Virtue, or Quality residing in God and deriv'd from him. Against these, I say, we are to believe him to be not barely a Power, Operation, or Quality, but really a Spiritual and Intellectual Substance; for beside that we are baptis'd in his Name, and profess our Faith in him; he is oppos'd to all evil and lying Spirits, which are acknowledg'd to be Intellectual Substances. And the Holy Scriptures frequently ascribe those personal Dispositions and Operations to him, that evidently suppose him to be a Person, and cannot be attributed to any thing less; for he is said *to be griev'd, to intercede for us, to search all things, even the deep things of God*, and the like: which are such personal Actions and Affections as no mere Quality is capable of. Again,

That the Holy Ghost is a Person distinct from the Father and the Son, is to be believ'd against another sort of Hereticks, who confounded the three Persons of the Trinity, destroying their substantial Properties, and thereby making them all but one Person under three different Names or Appellations.

Now this distinction of the Holy Ghost from the other two Persons is plainly held forth in sundry Places of the New Testament, where he is often stil'd *the Spirit of God*, he is said *to intercede for us with the Father*, to be our *Advocate and Comforter*, *to come from the Father*, and *to be sent by him*; with many other Expressions, that manifestly imply him to be a Person distinct from him: for otherwise he must be said to be an Advocate to himself, to intercede with, to come from, and to be sent by himself, which cannot with any congruity of Sense be applied to him. Moreover,

As this Holy Spirit is a Person distinct from the Father and the Son, so is he said in Scripture to proceed from both: That he proceeded from the Father; our Saviour expressly declares, John 15. 26. *The Spirit of Truth which proceedeth from the Father* (saith he) *he shall testify of me*; upon which account he is often stil'd *the Spirit of God*, and *the Spirit of the Father*, being sent by and proceeding from him.

Again, That he proceeded from the Son likewise, tho it be not so expresly affirm'd, is yet virtually contain'd and imply'd in sundry Expressions of Holy Scripture; for he is often called *the Spirit of the Son, the Spirit of Christ, and the Spirit of the Lord Jesus Christ*. And if his being call'd the Spirit of the Father signified his proceeding from him, his being called the Spirit of the Son must for the same Reason signify his proceeding from him also. Beside,

He is said to be sent by the Son as well as the Father; for he often told his Disciples, that he would send the Comforter to them, which was the Holy Ghost, to supply the Defects of his Absence; and tho he be sometime said to send him from the Father, and in the Father's Name, yet he is at other times said to send him himself, and likewise that the Father sends him in his Name, which Expressions suppose him to proceed equally from both; and this is the antient Catholick Faith in this matter. Thus having shew'd who is here meant by the Holy Ghost, I proceed to shew,

Secondly, What we are taught to believe of him, and this may be reduc'd to two Heads: (1.) The Divinity of his Person. And (2.) The Diversity of his Offices and Operations for the Salvation of Mankind.

1. For the Divinity of his Person: We are to believe the Holy Ghost to be truly and properly God, coequal and coessential with the Father and the Son, against the Heresy of the *Arians* and *Macedonians*, which hath been lately reviv'd by the *Socinians*, and others in our Age. Now that he is truly God, the Scriptures do plainly testify: For beside that he is rank'd with the Father and the Son in that Form of Baptism given by our blessed Saviour, *Mat.* 28. 19. and likewise in that usual Benediction of the Apostles, mention'd *2 Cor.* 13. 14. beside that, I say, the most proper Names of God, and all the Titles peculiar to the divine Persons are attributed to him, *Lying to the Holy Ghost* is call'd *Lying unto God*, *Acts* 5. 3, 4. *the Temple of the Holy Ghost* is call'd *the Temple of God*, *1 Cor.* 3. 16. all the incommunicable Properties and Attributes of God are ascrib'd to him, as Omnipresence, *Whither shall I go from thy Spirit?* &c. Omniscience, for he *searches the Heart, and knoweth the deep Things of God*, Eternity being before, in, and thro all times.

Again,

Again, all those divine Acts that are proper and peculiar to God only, are ascrib'd to him, as Creation, Regeneration, and the like.

Lastly, All those Acts of Faith and Worship which are due only to God, are offer'd up and requir'd to be paid to him; for we are to adore and glorify the Holy Spirit, to put our Trust and Reliance in him, which would be gross Usurpation and Idolatry if he were not truly God, equal to the Father and the Son. In a word, the divine Titles and Honours given to him, plainly prove and declare him to be a divine Person, which we are therefore (as the Catholick Faith directs) firmly to believe of him.

2. The next thing we are to believe of the Holy Ghost, is the several Offices and Operations he performs in the Oeconomy of Man's Salvation. Now of these Acts or Operations of the Holy Ghost, relating to Man's Salvation, there are two sorts:

The one extraordinary and supernatural; of which kind were those miraculous Gifts given in the Infancy of the Church, which lasted but for a time.

The other more ordinary and natural, suitable to the more adult and grown State of the Church, and these are to continue to the end of the World.

Of the first sort were those extraordinary Gifts and Inspirations that fell on the Apostles on the Day of Pentecost, for the planting and propagating of the Gospel; of which we read in this 2d Chapter of the *Acts*, where in the first and following Verses we are told, that the Holy Ghost, according to Christ's most gracious Promise, came down on the Apostles, *in the sound of a mighty rushing Wind, and sat upon the Heads of them in the shape of cloven Tongues as of Fire, and filled all the House where they were sitting.* Our Saviour at his leaving the World had commanded the Apostles, to stay at Jerusalem, and not to undertake the preaching or planting the Gospel, till *they were endow'd with Power from on high.* Upon which Order they continu'd there till the Day of Pentecost; at which time, while they were together, the Holy Ghost descended upon them in a visible Body of bright shining Fire, and inspir'd them with those Gifts that enabl'd and qualify'd them to propagate the Gospel thro the World.

Now to this end three things were absolutely necessary:

1. That they should be able to speak the several Languages of the World, to whom they were to preach.

2. That

2. That they should fully understand the Doctrines they were to deliver. And,

3. That they should have Power to convince and confirm the World in the Truth of them; for all which they were endow'd with Power from on high, by this Descent of the Holy Ghost.

1. I say, to preach and propagate the Gospel, 'twas necessary that the Apostles should be enabled to speak the several Languages of the Countries to which they were sent, for without this they were neither capable of teaching, nor the People of learning any thing from them; for *except they should utter with the Tongue Words easy to be understood, how should it be known what is spoken?* In such a Case they would only *speak into the Air, they would be Barbarians to the People, and the People Barbarians unto them.* To provide against this, the Holy Ghost inspir'd them with the Gift of Tongues, by which they were enabled of a sudden, without any Rules of Grammar or previous Instruction, to speak to Men of all Nations in their several Languages, declaring to each of them the woderful Works of God. This our Text here tells us, that being *fill'd with the Holy Ghost, they began to speak with other Tongues, as the Spirit gave them Utterance.* This the Men of all Nations, then present at *Jerusalem*, saw and heard to their great Amazement; they all wondring how those illiterate *Galileans*, who scarce understood their own Mother Tongue, should all of a sudden speak thus fluently in the Languages of all Countries, and even outdo the greatest Linguists and Philosophers: which could not be done by any Power of Nature or Art, but was the intire Work and Gift of the Holy Ghost. Again,

2. Not only the Knowledg of the Tongues, but a full and clear understanding of the Doctrine of the Gospel was necessary to the preaching and propagating of it; for as none can teach another what he hath no knowledg of himself, so neither could the Apostles lead others into all Truth without a clear and certain knowledg of it themselves: and because what they deliver'd was to be the Rule and Standard of Truth to all succeeding Generations, therefore the Holy Spirit, beside the Gift of Tongues, furnish'd them with the Gifts of Knowledg and Prophecy, whereby they were enabled to understand all Mysteries, and likewise to reveal and expound them to others. Thus we read, that the Disciples who *receiv'd the Holy Ghost, spake with Tongues and prophesy'd*, Acts 19. 6. meaning, that in the several Languages of those Places where they came, they explain'd the Mysteries of the

King-

Kingdom of Heaven; the Holy Ghost bringing to their Remembrance all that Christ had said and done, and likewise assisting them with farther Inspirations, necessary for the propagating of the Gospel, and delivering down the Truth to future Ages.

3. Another thing necessary to this end, was a Power of confirming the Truth of what they deliver'd with such unquestionable Evidence, as might be sufficient to convince and convert the World to the Belief of it: For none can or will believe without sufficient Evidence; and therefore that nothing might be wanting to the Faith of Mankind, the Holy Ghost, to the Gift of Tongues and Prophecy, added the Gift of Miracles, whereby the Apostles and others were enabl'd by many, mighty, and wonderful Works to attest the Truth and Divinity of their Doctrine. Hence we read upon this coming down of the Holy Ghost, that *many Wonders and Signs were done by the Apostles*, Act. 4. 30. they heal'd the sick, cur'd the blind and the lame with a word's speaking, they made the deaf to hear and the dumb to speak; yea, and rais'd the dead to Life again: all which exceeding the Power of Art and Nature, were the miraculous Effects of a divine Power, and prov'd the Doctrine they deliver'd to be truly divine. Indeed Miracles are the broad Seal of Heaven, to confirm and testify a thing to come from God, call'd therefore *the Demonstration of the Spirit and Power*, 1 Cor. 2. 4. And by these the Apostles plainly appear'd to be *Teachers come from God, for none could do the Works that they did, except God were with them.*

These were some of those extraordinary Gifts of the Spirit that were requisite upon the first planting and propagating of the Gospel, and were therefore rise in the early days of Christianity. But when the Gospel had spread and prevail'd every where, when the Natives of every Country embrac'd and understood the Christian Religion, and were able to instruct each other in their own Language; when the whole New Testament was reveal'd, and the great Truths of it sufficiently confirm'd, by the miraculous Effects of a divine Power accompanying it: then did these extraordinary Gifts expire and cease, together with the Reason of them; for the Spirit of God that doth nothing in vain, is not wont to give extraordinary Assistances, when ordinary Means will serve the turn. And this will lead me to consider,

2. Those ordinary and standing Offices and Operations of the Holy Ghost, which he still exerciseth in the Church, and will continue to do to the end of the World; for 'tis by this Holy Spirit

Spirit that Christ promis'd to be with his Followers *to the end of the World*, Mat. 28. 19. And when he ascended up into Heaven, he told them, he would send *another Comforter*, that is, this Holy Ghost, which would *abide with them for ever*, John 14. 16. Which Promise was not confin'd only to the Apostles and first Christians who died soon after, but to all Christians that live and succeed them to the end of the World. To these he continues,

1. To be a Teacher and Instructor in all the weighty matters of Religion; which Office he performs for them, partly by the inspir'd Writings of the Prophets and Apostles, who speak not of their own Heads, or by the Will of Man, but *as they were mov'd of the Holy Ghost*: and therefore St. Paul assures us, that *all Scripture is given by Inspiration of God, and is profitable for Doctrine, for Reproof, for Correction, for Instruction in Righteousness, that the Man of God may be perfect, and thorowly furnished to all good Works*, 2 Tim. 3. 16, 17. So that the Holy Scriptures are now the standing Rule and Direction for matters of Faith and Practice, and we should not vainly expect, or lightly rely upon any new Revelations. Again, the Holy Ghost now continues to instruct us, partly by appointing and consecrating an Order of Men to unfold, inculcate, and apply to us the Holy Scriptures; for St. Peter tells us, that *no Prophecy of Scripture is of any private Interpretation*, 2 Pet. 1. 20. So that private Persons may not presume to depend too much upon their own Sense and Interpretation of Scripture, but should be directed by those that are appointed to rule and teach them, and in a great measure yield to the publick Wisdom and Authority of the Church, which *is the Pillar and Ground of Truth*.

2. The Holy Ghost continues to sanctify, and work Grace in the Hearts of God's People, and thereby prepare them for Glory; hence he is stil'd the Spirit of Grace and Holiness, because he is the Cause of these things, and works them in us. 'Tis this Holy Spirit that illuminates our Minds, rectifies our Wills, renews our Affections, and purifies our Hearts: so the Apostle tells us, we are washed, we are sanctified, we are justified in the Name of Christ, by the Spirit of God, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost, 1 Cor. 6. 11. Tit. 3. 5.

3. The Holy Ghost continues to perform the Office of a Comforter, by suggesting to our Minds Arguments of Consolation in every condition, encouraging us to go on in our Christian Course, and bearing up our Spirits under all the Opposition and Difficulties we meet with in it. Hence we read of the *Comforts of the Spirit*,

Spirit, and the *Joy* of the *Holy Ghost*. 'Twas this supported the Saints, Martyrs, and Confessors of old under all their Sufferings; and 'tis by these Cordials that our Spirits are kept from sinking under the many Pressures, Troubles, and Temptations of this Life: the Spirit of God by bringing to our Mind comfortable Thoughts, *fills us with Joy and Peace in Believing*, and administers sometimes stronger Cordials, as our Necessities require.

4. The Holy Ghost continues to be our Advocate, to plead and make Intercession for us; and this he doth by inspiring us with those pious and devout Affections, that make our Prayers ascend like Incense, and return laden with Blessings into our own Bosom. 'Tis by this Holy Spirit (as the Apostle speaks) *that we are enabled to cry Abba Father*, Rom. 8. 15, 16. and in the same Chapter he adds, *that he makes Intercession for us with Sighs and Groans that cannot be utter'd*.

Lastly, The Holy Ghost performs the Office of a Witness, that is, not only to testify of Christ, that he is *the Son of God*, but likewise to *bear witness with our Spirit*, that *we also are the Children of God*.

Thus we see what we are to believe concerning the Holy Ghost, the third Person in the Blessed Trinity. From all which we may learn,

1. To render all due Honour and Adoration to this Divine Spirit; for being God blessed for ever, equal with the Father and the Son, he must have an equal Share of Divine Honour and Worship.

2. Let us learn hence earnestly to desire and pray for this Holy Spirit, the Fountain of all spiritual Grace and Comfort; to which we have abundant Encouragement from God's gracious Promise, of *giving the Holy Spirit to them that ask it*, Luk. 11. 13.

Lastly, Let us demean our selves becomingly to this Holy Spirit, not grieving it by neglecting its Gifts, and quenching its good Motions, nor doing despight to it, by contemning its Graces and refusing its Calls, nor any way provoking it by rejecting its Comforts or Instructions; but thankfully giving our selves up to its Guidance and Direction, imploring its Aid, receiving its Counsel, and embracing its Comfort: that being led by the Spirit in the ways of Grace here, he may after bring us to Glory.

DISCOURSE XXIII.

Eph. 4. 4. *There is one Body, and one Spirit, &c.*

HAVING in the foregoing Article explain'd what is reveal'd concerning the Person and Offices of the Holy Ghost; I proceed in the next place to what we profess to believe concerning the Church, which is constituted and animated by it: And this is held forth in the following Article, *I believe in the Holy Catholick Church, and the Communion of Saints.* Which Article hath two Branches:

The one relating to the *Unity of the Church*, the other to the *Communion of Saints* or Members of it. I begin with the first, *viz. the Holy Catholick Church*, which being express'd in the singular Number signifies the Unity of it, and may therefore be fitly discours'd of from these words, *There is one Body, and one Spirit.*

In treating whereof, with relation to the Creed, I must shew,

First, How the Church is said to be One.

Secondly, Why it is stil'd Holy. And,

Thirdly, In what sense it is said to be Catholick; and close up with some Practical Lessons to be learnt from each.

For the Nature and Notion of the Christian Church, I must refer the Reader to the 7th Discourse of the First Part, where 'tis defin'd to be *a spiritual Society of all Christian People, call'd out of the World, and united to Christ as the Head, and to one another as the Members.* Each part whereof being there distinctly handled, I shall proceed here to consider,

First, The Unity of it, *There is one Body, and one Spirit.* The Body (we know) tho consisting of many Members, having divers Offices and Functions, is yet but one; in like manner the Church, tho consisting of many Congregations for the Convenience of Worship and Discipline, is yet but one in Christ Jesus: so the Apostle tells the *Romans*, chap. 12. 4, 5. and the *Corinthians*, 1 Cor. 12. 12. The Jewish Church and Temple of old was but one Body, tho of a lesser Size and Extent, being confin'd only to one Nation; and the Christian Church is still but one and the same with that, enlarg'd by the Accession of the Gentiles, and

diffus'd

diffus'd over the Face of the whole Earth: which Accession makes indeed an Alteration in the largeness of its Extent and Dimensions, but none in the Nature and Substance of the Thing; for as a Person is said to be the same when grown up to the Stature of a Man, that he was in his Infancy or Childhood, even so the Church when arriv'd to the Fulness of the Stature of Christ, is one and the same it was under its weaker and more infant State: so the same Apostle tells the *Corinthians*, ver. 13. *We are all baptiz'd into one Body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free, Male or Female, we are all one in Christ Jesus*, Gal. 3. 28. The enlarging the Christian Church by the coming in of the Gentiles, did not make more Churches divided into separate and independent Societies, but only added more Parts to the same Church; the Accession of which new and similar Parts may make it bigger, but not another Body, than it was before; so that still *there is but one Body*. Now this Unity of the Church is made and preserv'd by many Bonds of Union, which are particularly mention'd in this Chapter.

The first and great Bond that keeps all the Parts together is the Unity of the Spirit, *There is one Body, and one Spirit*; by which is meant, that *One Holy Spirit of God*, treated of in the foregoing Article, which is vitally united to the Church, as the Soul is to the Body. For as the Soul animates and enlivens all the Parts of the Body, without which it would be but a dead heavy Carcase; even so all the Members of the Church are quicken'd and actuated by this Holy Spirit, without which they are void of all spiritual Life, and no better than *dead in Trespasses and Sins*: And as one Body can have but one Soul to actuate and enliven it, so the one mystical Body of Christ is only animated and quicken'd by one Spirit; so the Apostle tells us, 1 Cor. 12. 13. *By one Spirit we are all baptiz'd into one Body, and are all made to drink into one Spirit*.

2. Another Bond of Union that holds the Parts of this Body together, is their *being called into one Hope of their Calling*; that is, all the Members of Christ's Church are call'd to one Christian Profession, and likewise to one Hope of that Calling, viz. that common Salvation purchas'd by Christ, and promis'd to all good Christians. For tho' Mens particular Callings and Course of Life in this World are various, according as their private Inclinations, and the Interest of the Publick require, yet their general Calling as Christians is but one, in which they are all requir'd to walk;

and tho they have different Ends and Expectations from their worldly Callings, yet there is but one Hope of the Christian Calling, even the Salvation of our Souls, which we should therefore jointly agree to promote, and go hand in hand together in the way to it.

3. Another Bond of Union in this Body, is the Unity of the Head, imply'd in those words, *there is one Lord*; meaning, that there is but one Head of this Body, and that is Christ, who is the sole Lord and Master of his Church, *Col. 1. 18. Eph. 5. 23.* This is the Unity of Discipline, to preserve *Order and Decency* in the Church of Christ, that *all things in it may be done to edifying*; to which end, Christ as Head of the Church erected a standing Government in it, appointing the Apostles and Disciples to teach and to rule it: *As my Father* (saith he) *hath sent me, so send I you*; withal commissioning them to ordain and send others to the end of the World.

4. The Church is one by the Unity of Faith, *there is one Faith*; which being sum'd up in our Creed, is the Bond of Union in the weighty matters of Religion: for by believing that the Members of the Church preserve a Harmony and Consent in Doctrine, they agree in the same Faith, and are thereby kept from being distracted with Errors and Heresies; for which Reason they are commanded to *hold fast this Form of sound Words.*

5. The Church is united into one Body by the Bond of the Holy Sacraments; for there is *one Baptism*, the only Door of entrance into it: and *we being many are one Bread* (saith the Apostle) *by partaking whereof we become one Body*, *1 Cor. 10. 17.* So that all believing Christians being washed in the same *Laver of Regeneration*, *eating all the same spiritual Meat*, and *drinking all the same spiritual Drink*, become one spiritual Society by the Unity of the Sacraments. For as all the Members by Nerves and Sinews are fasten'd together into one natural Body; so all Christians being knit together by the Bonds and Ligaments of the Holy Sacraments, make up the one mystical Body of Christ.

Lastly, To compleat this Union the Apostle adds, *There is one God and Father of all, who is above all* by his Power, *in all* by his Presence, and *thro all* by his Providence. From all which Bonds of Union we may safely conclude the Unity of the Church; to which I shall only add the Unity of the Foundation: for as a House built upon one Foundation, tho it may have many Rooms and Apartments, is but one House; even so the Church being built upon one

Foundation (*for other Foundation can no Man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ*) can be but one Church; which is the first thing we here profess to believe concerning the Church, to wit, its Unity, *There is one Body.*

The *Second* is the Holiness of it, *I believe in the Holy Catholick Church*, acted and animated by *one Holy Spirit*. This Epithet or Title we find given to it in Holy Scripture, and the antient Fathers, in both which 'tis generally stil'd the Holy Church. For the better understanding whereof we must consider the Church, as Militant here on Earth, and likewise as Triumphant in Heaven; in both which senses 'tis said to be Holy, tho in different measures and degrees.

The one by an imperfect, the other by a more perfect Holiness. The militant Church here on Earth must again be consider'd as it is Visible, and likewise as 'tis Invisible.

The former consists of all those who are admitted by Baptism to be visible Members of it, the latter only of such as are sound and sincere Members of it: The former are in Scripture frequently stil'd *the Called*, the latter the *Chosen* or *Elect*; according to that of our Saviour, *Many are called, but few are chosen*. Both these are likewise said to be Holy, tho in different Kinds and Respects; the one by a relative, the other by an inherent Holiness.

1st. For the visible Members of the Church militant, they are said to be Holy,

1. In respect of that *Holy Calling* and Profession they have taken upon them; *Ye are called unto Holiness* (saith the Apostle) *1 Thess. 4. 7.* And *God hath called us with a Holy Calling*, *2 Tim. 1. 9.* By this Vocation they are called and separated from the rest of the World, and dedicated unto God; which Separation is in Scripture term'd Holiness: and the whole Body thus separated and dedicated is said to be Holy; for if the Sabbath and the Temple are called Holy, by being set apart from common Uses, how much more may the Body of Christians be so stil'd, who are separated from the rest of the World, and solemnly dedicated unto God?

2. The Church may be term'd Holy in respect to the Offices that are appointed, and the Powers that are exercis'd in it; which being by Institution and Operation Holy, denominate the whole Church Holy, in which these things are instituted and perform'd.

3. The

3. The Church may be stil'd *Holy*, in respect of the Obligation lying upon all the Members of it, which is to lead holy and virtuous Lives: for *every one that nameth the Name of Christ is to depart from Iniquity*; and every Member of his Church stands engag'd to the greatest Holiness; he is a Disciple and Follower of the Holy Jesus, who hath given the strictest Rules, and the best Examples to walk by: and both these are back'd with the highest Motives and Encouragements to walk in these ways, and likewise with the forest Threats and Afrightments from all straying and aberration from them. Besides which, every baptiz'd Christian hath vow'd and promis'd to be Christ's faithful Follower and Servant, and to walk in all Holiness and Purity of Life to the last; which Obligation lying upon every Member of the Church, 'tis for that reason justly stil'd *Holy*.

Lastly, The Church is farther so call'd, in respect of the End and Design of its Constitution, which is the begetting and increasing Holiness in all the Members of it: for Christ purchased to himself a Church, that he might (as the Apostle tells us) *purify to himself a peculiar People, zealous of good Works*; that is, that he might have some to have fellowship with by his Grace here, and by Holiness fit them for Glory hereafter; for *without Holiness no Man can see the Lord*.

Upon these Accounts chiefly all the Visible Members of the Church militant are and may be truly term'd *Holy*. But then,

2dly. The Invisible Members of this Church are so stil'd upon a farther and better account, *viz.* not barely by a relative, but by a personal and inherent Holiness wrought in them by the Holy Spirit of God: for they have not only their Souls washed from the Guilt of Sin in the Waters of Baptism, but their Natures renewed by the Holy Ghost, and their Hearts purify'd from the Pollution of it by the Power of Divine Grace; by which means, from the Slaves of Sin and Satan, they become the Servants of Christ, having *their Fruit unto Holiness*, and *in the end* receiving for Wages *Eternal Life*.

Now these are call'd Invisible Members of the Holy Church, because they are not easily known and discern'd from others; for here in this World good Men, by reason of the Disguises of Hypocrisy, and promiscuous Event of things, are hardly distinguish'd from bad: and therefore we find the Church compar'd sometimes to *Noah's Ark*, that receiv'd all sorts of Creatures, both *clean and unclean Beasts*; sometimes to a *Field*, where *Tares*
and

and Wheat grow together; between which no Separation is to be made till the Harvest.

Sometimes again 'tis compar'd to a *Net* that incloses good Fish and bad; at other times to a *great House*, in which there are not only *Vessels of Gold and Silver*, but also of *Wood and of Earth*, and some to *Honour*, and some to *dishonour*. By all which it appears, that the Church is a Complex Body, consisting of Persons truly Good, who are the *Heirs of Salvation*; and likewise of bad Men and Hypocrites, who are the *Vessels of Wrath fitted for Destruction*: between whom no Discrimination can be made here, which is therefore to be left to the final Determination of the last Day, when Christ the great Judge of the World shall separate the one from the other, as a *Shepherd divides the Sheep from the Goats*, setting the one at his *Right Hand*, and the other at his *Left*. However, both here denominate the *Church Holy*, the one by external Profession only, the other by internal and spiritual Regeneration. And this will lead me from the Militant State of the Church, to consider it in the

Next place, as Triumphant in Heaven; and this hath the Title of *Holy*, upon the account of a more perfect and indefeasible Holiness, to which all the true Members of it will attain in the World to come, when *Christ shall present it to himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, but it shall be for ever Holy and without blemish*, Ephes. 5. 27. This is the Second thing we here believe of the Church, that 'tis *Holy*.

The *Third* and Last is its *Universality*, I believe the *Holy Catholick Church*. Here by *Catholick Church* we understand the whole Body of Christians diffus'd thro all Places, and induring to all Times: for whereas the Jewish Church was confin'd to one Place, and consisted only of the Inhabitants of one Nation, the Christian Church is now enlarg'd to all Places and Persons, and extends to the utmost parts of the Earth; insomuch that *in all Nations, he that feareth God and worketh Righteousness, is accepted with him*. The time was when the Jews were the only People of God, and *Jerusalem* the sole Place of Worship, from which the Gentiles were excluded by a Partition Wall: *Jeury* was the Garden of God, which he impal'd and cultivated; *In Judah was God known, and his Name was great in Israel*; whilst the rest of the World lay like a neglected Common: *He shew'd his Word unto Jacob, his Statutes and Judgments unto Israel, he hath not done so with any Nation*, Psal.

147. 29. So that the *Israelites* then were the only peculiar People, and the whole Church was circumscrib'd within the narrow Confiners of *Judea*.

But now the Inclosure is broken down, and our Blessed Saviour, according to promise, hath *the Heathen for his Inheritance, and the uttermost Parts of the Earth for his Possession*. The Apostles indeed were first sent only to the *lost Sheep of the House of Israel*: But Christ after told them, that *he had other Sheep that belong'd not to that Fold*; and therefore enlarg'd their Commission, to go and teach all Nations, and preach the Gospel to every Creature, that they all may be one Flock, and one Fold, under one great Shepherd and Bishop of their Souls: And from this large spreading and diffusiveness of the Church over the face of the whole Earth, it is truly and properly stil'd *Catholick*.

Again, 2. 'Tis so call'd from the Faith profess'd and receiv'd in it; which being one and the same every where, is therefore stil'd *Catholick* in this sense. Particular Churches are sometimes stil'd *Catholick*, because they hold the *Catholick Orthodox Faith*, and so are sound Members of the *Catholick Church*.

3. The Church is so stil'd from some publick Acts and Duties of it, which tho done in one place, are universally valid and binding every where. Thus they who by Baptism are receiv'd into a particular or national Church, do thereby become Members of the *Catholick Church*, and are to be admitted to the Worship and Communion of it in all Places where they come, unless they exclude themselves by their own default. And likewise they who are duly excommunicated or turn'd out of any particular Church, are thereby excluded from all the Duties and Privileges of the *Catholick*, and may not be admitted to them any where, till they reconcile themselves to it by submission and penitence. Thus we see what we profess to believe concerning the Christian Church, viz. that 'tis but One, that 'tis Holy, and that 'tis *Catholick*.

For a close then:

1. From the Church's being One, all the Members of it should learn to unite in Heart and Affection; this was our Saviour's Prayer in their behalf, *that they all might be One*: And this was the first Christians Practice, of whom we read that they were *All of one Heart, and one Mind*. The Church we see is but one Body, and acted by one Spirit; and 'tis we know unnatural for the Members of the same Body to separate and divide from one another; and 'tis much more Unchristian for the Members of Christ's Mystical

Myſtical Body to do ſo: for which reaſon the Apoſtle wills us above all things *to keep the Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace*, and ſharply rebukes all that ſeparate and cauſe Diviſions. There muſt be indeed a local Separation, becauſe all the Members of the Catholick Church being diſpers'd in ſundry and diſtant Parts of the World, cannot meet in one Place or Aſſembly; but there muſt be no Diviſion in Communion, Worſhip or Diſcipline, no Altar againſt Altar, nor any breaking into Sects and Partys. For as in the natural Body, 'tis not the different Situation or Offices of the ſeveral Parts that makes a Schiſm, but the ſeparating or dividing one Member from another, for that deſtroys the Union of the Parts, and cuts off all Communication with the Whole: even ſo in the Myſtical Body of the Church, 'tis not the aſſembling in divers Places and Congregations, that makes a ſinful Separation, but ſetting up different Communion, and breaking off from a well-eſtabliſh'd Worſhip and Diſcipline; for this rends in pieces the Body of Chriſt, and makes the Church not one Body, but many.

2. From the Churches being Holy, we ſhould learn and practice the greateſt Holineſs; that *as he who hath called us is Holy, ſo ſhould we be in all manner of Converſation and Godlineſs. Holineſs becometh thy Houſe for ever* (ſaith the Pſalmiſt) and if Holineſs becometh the Church, as 'tis taken for the Houſe of God, how much more muſt it become the People of God that aſſemble in it? This is the ſenſe of thoſe frequent Exhortations of the Apoſtle, *to walk as becometh the Goſpel of Chriſt, to walk worthy of him unto all well-pleaſing, and to be followers of God as dear Children*, and the like.

Laſtly, From the Church's being Catholick, we learn not only the Goodneſs of God in extending the Bounds of his Church to the end of the World; but our own Duty, which continue Members of it to our Lives end, for out of the Church there is ordinarily no Salvation.

DISCOURSE XXIV.

Acts 2. 42. *They continued stedfastly in the Apostles Doctrine and Fellowship, and breaking of Bread, and in Prayers.*

HAVING in the foregoing Discourse explain'd the Nature, the Constitution, and the Extent of the Christian Church; I proceed, as the following part of the Creed directs us, to consider

The great Privileges that appertain to all the true Members of it.

And they are chiefly these Four; two whereof relate to this Life, being begun here, to wit, *The Communion of Saints, and the Forgiveness of Sins*: The other two refer to the next, being to be compleated hereafter, viz. *The Resurrection of the Body, and the Life Everlasting*. I shall speak at this time to the

First of these, *The Communion of Saints*; from these words of St. Luke, *They continued, &c.* In treating whereof, with relation to the Creed, I must shew,

First, Who are the Persons here understood by *Saints*.

Secondly, What Communion is to be held with them.

Thirdly, What is imply'd in the belief of this Communion.

For the

First, By *Saints* here, we are undoubtedly to understand Christians, or the Members of Christ's Church before describ'd; all which either are, or ought to be holy: They are call'd sometimes the Elect, the Brethren, the Faithful, and many times the *Saints*, as may be seen by the Inscriptions and Salutations of the Epistles written to them by the Holy Apostles. They are by Profession Men of Holiness, having by Baptism enter'd upon a High and Holy Calling; and till we certainly know them to be otherwise, we are in Charity to presume and believe them such.

But wherein does their Sanctity or Holiness consist? Why, Holiness in Scripture frequently signifies a separation from common and ordinary, to holy and sacred Uses, and is therefore often apply'd to Things as well as Persons: Times and Places are for this reason call'd *Holy*; The Sabbath-Day, the Temple, with
all

all the Vessels and Utensils thereof, are said to be Holy unto the Lord, being set apart from profane and common Uses, and apply'd only to Exercises that are Peculiar and Divine. Thus Persons dedicated to any Sacred Office or Function, are stil'd Holy; and generally all such as are call'd from the common Condition of the World, unto any peculiar Service or Relation to God, are thereby denominated Holy, and call'd *Saints*.

But are all that are admitted into the Church thereby made inwardly Holy, and become truly Saints? No, The Church, as was before observ'd, is a Field that hath Tares as well as good Corn, Chaff as well as Wheat; that is, bad Men and Hypocrites, as well as good and sound Christians. But because we cannot certainly distinguish the one from the other, and no Separation will be made between them till the last Day, Charity teaches to believe, hope and judg the best of all Men; and, for that Christian Profession and Engagement they have enter'd into, to account them Holy. We find the *Israelites* in Scripture stil'd a *Holy Nation*, a *Chosen Generation*, a *Royal Priesthood*, a *Peculiar People*, upon the account of their Dedication unto God, tho many of them prov'd a stubborn, murmuring and rebellious Generation. In like manner we find many in the New Testament, for imbracing the Christian Faith, call'd *Saints*; tho some of them rather abus'd than adorn'd that noble Title. In short then, all Christians, as well by outward Profession, as by inward Purity and Renovation of Mind, are here understood by the Name of *Saints*. But,

Secondly, What is that *Communion of Saints* which we here profess to believe and maintain? Why, in general, 'tis a readiness to join together in all the publick Offices of our common Christianity: More particularly, 'tis, as our Text directs, to *continue stedfast in the Apostles Doctrine and Fellowship, and in breaking of Bread, and in Prayers*; for in these things St. *Luke* places the Communion of the Primitive Church.

1st. I say, The Communion of Saints consists in a stedfast continuance in the Apostles Doctrine, or a joint Adherence and Agreement in all the necessary essential Points of Faith, sum'd up and deliver'd to us in the Apostle's Creed. By the necessary Points of Faith, we understand those upon which the Foundation of Christianity stands, without the belief of which we cannot be sav'd; as that Christ is the Saviour of the World, and the sole Mediator between God and Man; together with the Fundamental Vertities

upon which his Mediation depends. In these there is to be an universal Consent and Agreement-among Christians, who are to join together in a Unity of Faith: this is the meaning of those Scriptures, that require us *to mind, and think, and speak the same thing; to stand fast in one Spirit with one Mind, and to strive together for the Faith of the Gospel.* There are other Truths of lesser moment, that do not affect the Foundation; in these a greater Liberty and Latitude of Belief may and must be allow'd: but in the *one Faith, once deliver'd to the Saints*, all Christians should agree, and be perfectly join'd together in the *same Mind and the same Judgment*; which is the first Branch of this Communion of Saints. The

2d Is a *stedfast Continuance in the Apostles Fellowship*; which being mention'd apart from *breaking of Bread*, must be understood of owning their Authority, and adhering to their Government: for the Apostles were appointed by Christ as his Deputies to teach and govern his Church; and the adhering to their Discipline, as well as Doctrine, is call'd *Living in their Fellowship.* Now to continue in the Apostles Fellowship, is to own the Authority of the Bishops and Pastors of the Church, who succeed the Apostles in that Office; for Christ promised to *be with the Apostles to the end of the World*, which could not be with them in their own Persons, who died soon after, but in their Successors, who were to teach and govern the Church to the end of the World: So that by keeping in Fellowship with our lawful Bishops, who are their Successors, we may be said to keep in Fellowship with them. This is the sense of those words, *Obey them that have the Rule over you in the Lord, and submit your selves, for they watch for your Souls,* Heb. 13. 17. and elsewhere, *Know them that are over you in the Lord, and have them in Honour for their Works sake.* This then is part of this Communion, to live in subjection to our respective Bishops, and adhere to their Government, without being seduc'd from them into Sects or Combinations.

3ly. Another Branch of the Communion of Saints is a *stedfast Continuance in Breaking of Bread*, that is, in receiving the Holy Sacrament; for we being many (saith the Apostle) are *one Bread, and one Body, for we are all Partakers of that one Bread*, 1 Cor. 10. 17. meaning, that as we are all admitted into the Church by our Baptism, so we are all united in it by one Communion; for *the Bread that we break, is it not the Communion of the Body of Christ? and the Cup of Blessing which we bless, is it not the Communion of the*

Blood of Christ? as the Apostle argues in the 16th Verse of that Chapter. Bread we know is the staff of our natural Life, that keeps the Body and Soul together; and Christ is that *living Bread* that preserves our spiritual Life, and unites us to him and one another. So that we cannot better shew our selves the living Members of Christ's Body, than by living together in one Communion: for Christ would have no Schism in his Body, no dividing or separating from one another, but joining in one Fellowship and Communion; that as all Christians belong to the same Body, so they should endeavour to keep the Unity of it in the Bond of Peace, which is by one Communion, that being the sole Bond that can keep them together; inasmuch that in all Places where we come, either in our own or foreign Countries, we are to associate where we may in the publick Acts of Worship, and likewise receive all others into our Communion, to shew that we are all of one Body, and believe the Communion of Saints.

4ly. The last, tho not the least Act of this Communion, is the *continuing stedfast in Prayers*; that is, chiefly in the publick Prayers and Devotion of the Church: for tho God is ever ready to hear the private and secret Prayers of his People, yet he esteems himself most honour'd, and we appear most united by joining in the publick Devotions; for which Reason the Apostle wills Christians, *not to forsake the assembling themselves together, as the manner of some is*, Heb. 10. 25. but to hold fast the Christian Profession, and adhere to the publick Devotion without wavering. By this we have Fellowship with God and one another, and this is a principal Branch of the Communion of Saints; for hereby we address to one God thro one Mediator, putting up the same Petitions; and according to our Saviour's Direction agreeing together in what we ask, which puts a greater Life, and procures better Acceptance to our Prayers. We may not then refuse to join in publick Prayers with the Christians of any Place or Country where we come, nor refuse to admit any that come to us: For tho the Forms of Prayer and Liturgies may be different in several Churches and Countries, yet while they are made by the same Rules, and offer'd up for the same Ends; that is, while they are all put up to one and the same God, for the same common Mercies, and thro the Merits of the same Mediator, they are for substance the same, and we may and ought, as Occasion requires, join and admit one another to them, tho put up in distant Places; and in different Forms of Expression or Language.

Thus

Thus having seen wherein the Communion of Saints ^{acts,} let us in the next place enquire, with whom the Saints have this Communion. In answer to which St. John tells us,

1. That we have Communion with God the Father, 1 John 1. 3. *Our Fellowship is with the Father*; and this on God's part consists in the Communication of his Grace and Goodness unto us; on ours, in the Returns of Love, Gratitude, and Adoration to him: by both which we become *transform'd into his Image*, and are made in some measure *Partakers of his Divine Nature*.

2. We have hereby Communion with God the Son; for *God hath called us* (saith St. Paul) *unto the Fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord*, 1 Cor. 1. 9. And St. John to the same purpose, *Truly our Fellowship is with the Father and his Son Jesus Christ*. He as Head derives down Strength and Nourishment to his Church, and we as Members communicate with him, and by the Influence of his Grace are kept and cherish'd to eternal Life.

3. The Saints have Communion likewise with the Holy Ghost, which is in Scripture stil'd the *Fellowship of the Spirit*: And indeed the Communion with the Father and the Son is wrought and preserv'd in us by the Communication of the Holy Spirit; and therefore they are join'd together in that solemn and frequent Benediction, *The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Love of God, and the Fellowship of the Holy Ghost be with you all*.

4. The Saints have some Communion with the Holy Angels, who are therefore said to be *ministring Spirits to the Heirs of Salvation*: They not only attend and assist them in their ways, but likewise rejoice in their Welfare; for we read, that *there is Joy in Heaven over one Sinner that repenteth*, Luke 15. 10.

5. The Saints have or ought to have Communion with all the Members of the Church militant here on Earth; not that they can all actually meet in the same Place, but that they all agree in the Substance of their Worship, or never separate or divide in it for lesser matters: for *if we walk in the Light* (saith St. John) *we have Fellowship one with another*, 1 John 1. 7. Christians are join'd together by all the Ligaments and Endearments of Religion, and therefore may not divide either in Affection or Communion.

Lastly, The Saints have some kind of Communion with the departed Members of the Church triumphant in Heaven; and this consists in praising God for them, in propounding their pious Examples, and endeavoring to tread in their steps, by an Imitation of their holy Lives and Actions: for which Reason the A-

posle, speaking to all that are called Christians, saith, *Ye are come unto Mount Sion, unto the City of the Living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and an innumerable Company of Angels, to the general Assembly and Church of the First-born, that are written in Heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the Spirits of just Men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the New Covenant, Heb. 12. 22, 23.* meaning, that they should endeavour to be conformable to them in their Lives here, that they may be fitted for a more immediate and compleat Communion with them hereafter in Heaven. This is the Communion of Saints. But,

Thirdly, What is it to believe this Communion of Saints? Why, this implies not barely an Assent to the Truth of it, but a firm Adherence to it, and in the whole Course of our Lives continuing stedfast in this one Communion: This we are taught to do, not only by the Example of the first Christians here in the Text, but by many express Precepts to the same purpose. Christ pray'd that his Followers might *be one*; and St. Paul strictly warns all Christians, that there *be no Divisions among them*, but that they remain firm in the Faith and Communion of the Church, *being of one Accord and one Mind*.

So that they who break into different Communions, or divide the Unity of the Church by Sects or Schisms, do not rightly understand or believe this Article; for by refusing to communicate with their Brethren, and excluding others from their Communion, they divide the one Fold and one Flock of Christ, and make new Partition Walls in the Church, when the old one is broken down. In a word, they who make other Covenants beside that of Baptism necessary to intitle Christians to the external Privileges of the Church, make the Pales of it narrower than Christ hath appointed, and thereby in effect deny or disown the Communion of Saints.

But since we all profess to believe the Communion of Saints, how comes it to pass that so many Sects and Divisions are found among Christians?

Why, There are two things that have unhappily occasion'd this Breach of Communion in the Christian Church.

The one is, the requiring unlawful Conditions of Communion; the other is, the refusing of lawful ones.

The former is the Fault of the Church of *Rome*, who by adding new Articles of Faith, and corrupting their Worship by
impure

impure and sinful Mixtures, have driven a great Part of the Christian World from their Communion.

The latter is the Fault of Sectaries and Dissenters, who by an obstinate Refusal of the lawful Rules of Order and Decency in Divine Worship, have wilfully broke off from the Communion of the Church of *England*, and set up separate and schismatical Meetings of their own.

The first is a just and necessary Separation; for where we cannot communicate without committing of Sin, there we are requir'd to *separate, to come out from among them, and not to touch the unclean thing*, 2 Cor. 6. 17. And in such Cases, they who impose such sinful and unwarrantable Terms, not they that refuse them, make the Breach, and are the schismatical Dividers.

The second is a sinful and unjust Separation, because it breaks the Communion of the Church without a just Cause; for where the Conditions of Communion are lawful, and may be comply'd with without Sin, as the Dissenters themselves own by their Occasional Communion, there to divide is to commit a Sin, and to be guilty of evident and notorious Schism.

But may we not leave an imperfect or impure way of Worship, to join in better or purer Ordinances? No, for this would open a gap for all Confusion, especially if every one should judg for himself of these purer Ordinances, and be allow'd to separate upon that Pretence; for this would multiply Schisms, and leave no end of Divisions, as may be sadly seen in the numerous Sects of our Days, who are still refining upon one another, till they have evaporated their Religion into Air, and almost refin'd it all away.

Thus I have explain'd to you the Communion of Saints, wherein it consists, with whom it is held, as also when it is truly believ'd, and when broken. Upon the whole, we learn hence,

1. Not to separate from the Church upon any pretended Unholiness in the Members; for the Communion of Saints is of all baptiz'd Christians, and we may not make the Terms of it straiter and narrower than Christ hath made them. The Church here consists of good Men and bad, of Hypocrites as well as sound Believers; and as the best have many Failings, so the worst have many Disguises: so that 'tis not in our power to know or distinguish the one from the other, and therefore we ought to hold Communion with both; our Duty is to search and amend our own ways, not to censure or condemn others. Indeed where Mens Vices

Vices are visible, we are to withdraw from their Sins, and *have no Fellowship with them in the unfruitful Works of Darknes*; but we may not refuse to join with them in the means of Salvation, or for their sakes withdraw from the Worship and Service of God. There were many bad Men, and very bad things done in the Church of *Corinth*, and yet *St. Paul* blam'd their separating into Parties, and would have no Divisions among them: There is no absolute Purity or Perfection in this Life, that is a Happiness reserv'd for a future State, when the Church shall be presented pure without Spot or Wrinkle, or any such thing. In the mean time,

2. We are to preserve the Unity of the Body, and live together in the Communion of Saints; not dividing our selves from those whom the Bonds of Charity and Christianity have made one, but going to the House of God together as Friends, and uniting in one Fellowship and Communion: this is the best way to unite us in brotherly Love and Kindness, and to extinguish all those Heats and Animosities which are the natural and unavoidable Effects of Division. In a word, let us of this Kingdom heartily and unanimously join in the Worship and Communion of the Church of *England*, which being a sound part of the Catholick Church, we cannot separate from it without dividing from the Whole.

DISCOURSE XXV.

Acts 5. 31. *Him hath God exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give Repentance unto Israel, and Forgiveness of Sins.*

WE have seen the first great Privilege appertaining to the Catholick Church, *viz. The Communion of Saints*: I come now to the second, which is contain'd in the

Next Article, in these words, *I believe the Forgiveness of Sins*; in discoursing whereof, I must shew,

First, The Nature and Guilt of Sin.

Secondly, What is meant by the Forgiveness of it.

Q q

Thirdly,

Thirdly, How far it extends.

Fourthly, What is imply'd in the Belief of this Forgiveness.
For the

First, St. John hath defin'd for us the Nature of Sin, stiling it *The Transgression of a Law*, 1 John 3. 4. *Where there is no Law, there is no Transgression; and Sin is not imputed where there is no Law.* So that Sin evermore supposes a Law or Rule to walk by, and betokens a Breach or Deviation from it, and that either by omitting something which the Law requires, or committing something that it forbids; the former is a Sin of Omission, the latter of Commission: and both these may be done, either knowingly against the Conviction of the Mind, and then 'tis a Sin of Wilfulness; or ignorantly and without sufficient Knowledg, and then 'tis a Sin of Weakness. Again,

This Ignorance may be either invincible, occasion'd by the lack of sufficient means of Knowledg, and then 'tis a Sin of Infirmary; or affected, proceeding from the neglect or contempt of means, and then 'tis a Sin of Presumption. Moreover, a Law may be broken either Deliberately and after some Debate, and then 'tis in a high degree a Sin of Wilfulness; or Unadvisedly and upon Surprise, and then 'tis a Sin of Inadvertence or daily Incurſion. In short, every voluntary Breach or Violation of a known Law is what in Scripture is called Sin, tho some may be more hainous than others; and indeed the more voluntary, still the more hainous: which will lead us from the Nature, to consider

The Guilt of Sin, and this consists in an Obligation to Punishment: for all Sin being an Affront to the Divine Majesty, justly incurs his Displeasure; and being a Violation of the Authority of his Laws, binds the Sinner over to suffer the Penalty annex'd to them. Now the Punishment threatned and annex'd to the Breach of God's Law is Death, which implies not only all the Diseases and Miseries of this World, but the eternal Pains and Torments of the next: *The Wages of Sin is Death*, Rom. 6. last. Death appertains and is due to it as Wages is to a Servant, Sin not only deserves but naturally leads to Death; for he that hath offended God by breaking his Laws, hath made himself obnoxious to Divine Wrath, and is become liable to the Punishment denounc'd against them that do so. Now this Debt or Obligation to Punishment, is what the Scripture calls the Guilt of Sin; and

and this doth not pass away with the Act of Sinning, but remains after it, which is in Scripture express'd by *Sin's lying at the Door*. Having seen the Guilt, let us proceed to inquire,

Secondly, What is meant by the Forgiveness of Sin: And this consists in the Release of this Obligation, or the freeing of any from that Debt to Divine Justice, which by transgressing the Law he had contracted. For as a Malefactor is said to be pardon'd, when the punishment of his Offence is remitted; and a Debt is said to be forgiven, when 'tis either paid or satisfy'd for: even so Sin is pardon'd, when God Almighty remits the Punishment, and esteems of us as if it were not committed. And this is in Scripture variously express'd, sometimes by *covering of Sins*, and not *imputing them unto us*; sometimes by *seeing no iniquity in Jacob*, nor *perverseness in Israel*; sometimes by *forgetting our Sins*, and *remembering them no more*: All which signify the Forgiveness of Sins to be an Exemption from the Guilt, and a Release from the Punishment that was due to it.

And this is done partly here in this Life, and will be more perfectly done in the next. In this Life, tho we are exempted from the Sentence of Eternal Death, and secur'd from ever suffering those future and everlasting Torments which our Sins deserve; yet we are not wholly exempted from temporal Punishments, nor freed from those Corrections that serve to awaken and deter us from the love and practice of Sin. Here we are still exercis'd with Evils and Afflictions for many wise and good Ends, and *Death passeth upon all Men, for that all have sinned*: But hereafter we shall be totally exempted from these and all other Punishments due to our Sins, and have a compleat and irreversibile Act of Indemnity pass upon all our Miscarriages.

But how is this *Forgiveness of Sins* procur'd and obtain'd for us? Why, not by any Act or Merits of our own, for we cannot of our selves satisfy or make an Atonement for the least Iniquity, and much less for our innumerable Transgressions of the Divine Law; but this is intirely owing to the Sufferings and Satisfaction of our Blessed Saviour, who hath *put away Sin by the Sacrifice of himself*. Indeed Justice requir'd Satisfaction before the Guilt or Penalty of Sin could be remitted: and because Death was the Punishment due to it, the Son of God was pleas'd to *give himself up to Death*, and to *make his Soul an Offering for Sin*; which by reason of the Dignity of the Person, is a more valuable Satisfaction and Atonement,

ment, than the Death of all Mankind could have been. So that by this All-sufficient Sacrifice he hath appeas'd the Wrath of God, and satisfy'd Divine Justice, and thereby acquitted us from the Guilt and Punishment of our Sins. Hence our Text tells us, that *Christ is exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give Forgiveness of Sin*: And the Apostle's Commission was, *thro him to preach the Forgiveness of Sin*, Acts 13. 38. *for in him we have Redemption thro his Blood, even the Forgiveness of Sin*, Ephes. 1. 7. Because all things were purg'd with Blood, and without shedding of Blood there was no Remission, the Son of God shed his own Blood for the *Remission of our Sins*, Mat. 26. 20. Thus we see how Pardon of Sin is procur'd. But,

How or on what Terms is it granted? Is it given generally and promiscuously to all Offenders? No, that would encourage and harden them in their Offences, and make *Sin abound, because Grace hath abounded*; which can neither consist with the Justice, nor comport with the Ends of God's Goodness: The Promise of Pardon is not Absolute, but Conditional; 'tis suspended upon the Conditions of Faith, Repentance, and Forgiving of others.

1. Faith is necessary to the Forgiveness of Sin; for 'tis thro the Merits of Christ alone, that we can obtain Mercy, and 'tis only believing and depending upon him that intitles us to both: *for without Faith 'tis impossible for us to please God, or for God to pardon us*. Hence the Apostle tells us, *He is set forth as a Propitiation for the Remission of Sins, thro Faith in his Blood*, Rom. 3. 25.

2. Repentance is another Condition of the Forgiveness of Sin; *for except ye repent (says our Saviour) ye shall all likewise perish*: And therefore the Apostles were sent to *preach Repentance for the Remission of Sins*. Accordingly St. Peter's Sermon to the Jews was, *Repent and be converted, that your Sins may be blotted out*, Acts 3. 19. Our Text tells us, that Christ was *exalted to give Repentance in order to the Forgiveness of Sin*, the one always going before the other; for 'tis *they that confess and forsake their Sins, that alone find Mercy*, Prov. 28. 13.

3. The forgiving of others Trespasses is necessary to the forgiving of our own; for our Saviour hath taught us to pray for the one as we perform the other, and hath frequently told us, that without forgiving our Brother we forfeit all title to Forgiveness: He who took his fellow Servant by the Throat for forty Pence, when his Master had just before remitted him a thousand Talents, was call'd to a second Reckoning, where the remitted Sum

was.

was exacted from him, and he cast into Prison till he should pay the utmost Farthing: *Even so (says our Saviour) will your Heavenly Father do to you, except ye forgive one another their Trespases.* There is no Forgiveness for impenitent and uncharitable Persons, for *they shall have Judgment without Mercy, who shew no Mercy.*

Thus we see the Nature of this Forgiveness, the Manner how it was effected, and the Terms on which alone we are to expect it.

Thirdly, Our next Inquiry must be into the Extent of this Pardon, how far it reaches, and whether it extends to all, even the greatest Sins.

To this our Blessed Saviour hath given an Answer, *Mat. 12. 31, 32. I say unto you, All manner of Sin and Blasphemy shall be forgiven unto Men; but the Blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven, neither in this World, nor that which is to come.* Where Christ declares all Sins pardonable, except that against the Holy Ghost, which is utterly incapable of all Favour or Allowance. Now this Sin against the Holy Ghost, is a wilful rejecting of the Doctrine and Miracles of our Saviour, ascribing both, not to the Spirit of God, but to the Devil, and blaspheming them as Impostures and Satanical Delusions: which Blasphemy against the Holy Ghost is unpardonable, not for want of sufficient Mercy and Goodness in God, but from the Incapacity of the Subjects, who by rejecting the Means and Conditions of Pardon, render themselves incapable of it. This is that *sinning wilfully after receiving the Knowledge of the Truth*, for which the Apostle tells us *there remains no Sacrifice, or Expiation, Heb. 10. 26.* for such *tread under-foot the Son of God*; that is, they despise him who alone can pardon them; they *count the Blood of the Covenant* (by which alone the Forgiveness of Sin is obtain'd and convey'd to us) *an unholy thing*; they *do despite to the Spirit of Grace*, by rejecting all his Miracles, whereby the Truth and Benefits of Christianity are confirm'd and seal'd to us; they *crucify afresh the Son of God*, by approving the Jews Fact in crucifying him; and *put him again to an open Shame*, as if he had justly died as an Impostor or Malefactor. These wilfully apostatizing and falling away from Christianity, the Apostle affirms it *impossible to renew them again unto Repentance*; and consequently it must be impossible for them to obtain Remission of Sin.

But

But for all other Failings, that are consistent with the Belief of Christianity, they are remissible by the Merits and Mercy of a Mediator. As for the Guilt of Original Sin, that is washed away in the Waters of Baptism, which is therefore stil'd the *Laver of Regeneration*: And for all actual Sins committed after it, they all may and shall be forgiven upon our true Repentance. Neither the number, nor the hainousness of our Offences can deprive us of God's Mercy, nor exclude us from the Promise and Possibility of a Pardon; for if we *cease to do Evil and learn to do well*, God Almighty hath told us, *tho our Sins be as Scarlet, they shall be as white as Snow; and tho they be as Crimson, they shall be as Wool*, Isa. 1. 17, 18.

Now this Forgiveness of Sins is not only purchas'd for us by the Death and Satisfaction of our Saviour, but is reveal'd and deliver'd to us in Holy Scripture, which is therefore call'd the *Word of Reconciliation*; the Gospel being the Grand Charter of our Peace, that consigns to every returning Sinner a Patent of Pardon and Reconciliation.

Beside which, this Pardon is by Christ's Ordinance publish'd and dispens'd to us by his Ministers; to whom he hath given Power and Commandment to declare and pronounce to his People, being penitent, the Absolution and Remission of their Sins. Christ's Commission to his Apostles was, to *preach Repentance and Remission of Sins to all Nations*, Luke 24. 47. adding withal, *Whosoever Sins ye remit, they are remitted; and whosoever Sins ye retain, they are retained*, John 20. 23. signifying, that God hath given Authority to his Ministers to dispense and pronounce his Pardon to all penitent Persons; and the Sentence they thus regularly pronounce here on Earth, shall be hereafter ratify'd and confirm'd in Heaven.

Moreover, this Pardon is seal'd and convey'd to us by the Holy Sacraments: *Repent and be baptiz'd for the Remission of Sins*, saith St. Peter to the Jews, Acts 2. 38. the Stain and Guilt of Sin being washed away in that *Laver of Regeneration*.

And if after Baptism we happen to relapse and fall again into Sin, we must renew our Repentance, and by receiving the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, endeavour to fortify our selves with Grace and Strength to resist it for the future; we are to seek Reconciliation by addressing to Christ's Holy Table, and to have our Souls wash'd with his most precious Blood, which *was shed for many for the Remission of Sins*. And this will lead me

In the *Fourth* and *Last* place to enquire, what it is to believe this Article of the Forgiveness of Sins. In answer to which, 'tis not barely to assent to the Truth of it, and to believe that a Pardon may be had; but it implies such an Assent, as sets us upon the seeking and suing out after it, as those that are lost and undone for ever without it. For as a condemn'd Person, lying under the Sentence of Death, will not rest in the bare possibility or vain hopes of a Pardon, but bestirs himself and spares no pains to procure it; even so we being by our Transgressions guilty Persons before God, and lying under the Sentence of eternal Death, must not content our selves with an idle Belief of God's Mercy, but use the best means to obtain a Share and Interest in it.

More particularly, the Belief of this Forgiveness teaches these two things. (1.) Not to presume of Mercy and Pardon without observing the Conditions. And (2.) Not to despair of it upon the performance of them.

1. I say, we are so to believe the Forgiveness of Sins, as not to presume upon it without observing the Conditions of it; for the Promise of Pardon is not absolute but conditional, 'tis granted only (as was before observ'd) upon the Terms of Faith, Repentance, and the Forgiving of others. To expect it otherwise is to hope upon no Grounds; yea to ask God to forgive us upon any other Terms, is but to beg leave to affront and provoke him. If then we would have any well-grounded Hopes of Mercy and Pardon, we must not only depend upon the Merits of Christ for the Expiation of Sin, but likewise do our part in repenting and turning from it; and if we would have God to *forgive us our Trespases*, we must be ready to *forgive them that trespass against us*, reconciling our selves to any that we have offended, and making Restitution and Satisfaction where we have done any Injury or Wrong. These are God's Terms of Mercy and Pardon, and 'tis great Vanity and Presumption to look for it upon any other. And as we may not presume, so neither

2. Should we despair of Mercy upon performing the Conditions; for Christ's Death has procur'd a full Pardon for the greatest Sins, and he has commission'd his Ministers to proclaim it to the greatest Sinners: if we repent and amend, there is no Sin too big to be forgiven. Christ's Blood can wash out the deepest Guilt, and his Merits are sufficient to atone for the blackest Offences. *David's Murder and Adultery, Paul's Blasphemy and bloody Persecutions,*

secutions, *Peter's* Perjury and Denying his Master, were all forgiven; and if these crying Enormities, committed with Deliberation and Contrivance, and heighten'd with many Circumstances of Aggravation, did not miss of a Pardon, there can be no reason for the greatest Offenders to doubt or despair of Mercy upon their hearty Sorrow and Repentance.

But here care must be taken, that they so forsake their Sin as not to return to it again; for *if the Righteous Man turn from his Righteousness and do Iniquity, all his Righteousness shall not be mentioned, but in the Sin which he hath sinned, in that he shall die, Ezek. 18. 24.* If we relapse into Wickedness, our former Pardon will be cancel'd, and we shall be accountable for all our Transgressions; and therefore to make it good and available, we must persevere in our Repentance, and return no more to Folly. To conclude then, from this Discourse we learn,

1. The infinite Love of Christ, in purchasing this Pardon for us at the dear rate of his own most precious Blood; this is a Mercy never enough to be valu'd and admir'd by us, *That when we were Enemies, we were reconcil'd unto God by the Death of his Son.*

2. We learn hence the great Privilege of being born within the Pales of the Church, where this great Blessing of the Forgiveness of Sin is obtain'd and dispens'd to all true Members of it; and likewise how thankfully we are to own and make a right use of it.

Lastly, We should learn hence to qualify our selves for this great Blessing, by observing the Conditions upon which 'tis bestow'd; that is, let us stedfastly believe in Christ, and rely upon his Satisfaction: to which we are to add, true Repentance and a thorow forsaking of every evil way.

But above all, *let us have fervent Charity among our selves, forgiving and forbearing one another in Love, as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven us; for Charity shall cover a Multitude of Sins:* and if we forgive one another, our Father which is in Heaven will certainly forgive us.

DISCOURSE XXVI.

ACTS 26. 8. *Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the Dead?*

HAVING explain'd the two first Privileges of the Catholick Church, that commence here in this Life, *viz. The Communion of Saints, and Forgiveness of Sins*: I proceed to the two last, that are reserv'd for the World to come, and they are, *The Resurrection of the Body, and the Life everlasting.* Of the

First of these, which is the Subject of the next Article, *viz. The Resurrection of the Body*, I shall treat from these Words of St. Paul, *Why should it be thought a thing incredible? &c.* For the more clear and easy handling whereof, I shall shew,

First, The Credibility of this Article of the Resurrection of the Body.

Secondly, What it is that makes it seem incredible.

Thirdly, The Certainty of it, notwithstanding that seeming Incredibility; to which I shall add something touching the Manner and Effects of it. I begin with the

First, The Credibility of a Resurrection, that we may see upon what our Belief of it is grounded. And here what we mean by a Resurrection hath been explain'd already, in the Discourse of our Saviour's Resurrection, viz. The restoring of a dead Person to Life again, or the reuniting of Soul and Body after they have for some time undergone a Separation.

That this is possible, we have likewise seen in Christ's Resurrection, who after he was truly dead, and had lain three days in the Grave, came to Life again, and convers'd with his Disciples in the same Body, in which he before suffer'd and died: To which if we add, that Christ died and rose again as our Head and Representative, we may easily conclude the Possibility of the thing; and likewise that his Resurrection was a sure and certain pledg of ours, for that he hath a Power to raise the Dead is evident by his raising himself; and if his Death and Resurrection were in our stead, and as our Surety, to be sure he that rais'd himself is able

likewise to quicken our mortal Bodies. So the Apostle strongly argues, Rom. 8. 11. *If the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the Dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the Dead, shall also quicken us by his Spirit that dwelleth in us.* Hence he is stil'd, *the First-born from the Dead, and the First-fruits of them that slept.* By this he hath made Death no other than a Sleep, and the Grave only the Dormitory of our Bodies, where when we die, we lie down to take our Rest; a Morning awaiting us far more glorious than the Sun, that now rouses us from our Pillows. Christ being risen as the Earnest and First-fruits from the Grave, assures us that the Dead in Christ shall awake and rise after him; for *if we believe that Christ died and rose again, even so them that sleep in Jesus shall God bring with him,* 1 Thess. 4. 14. And therefore the Apostle asks the Question, *If Christ be preach'd that he rose from the Dead, how say some among you that there is no Resurrection?* 1 Cor. 15. 12. as if it were absurd to doubt our own, after so full a Proof of Christ's Resurrection.

Beside, Our Saviour's raising *Lazarus* and others from the Dead, in the View of many People, after they had lain for sometime in the Grave, is a plain Demonstration of the Possibility of the thing. And this will lead me to enquire,

Secondly, Why it should be thought a *thing incredible* that God should raise the Dead? which Question manifestly supposes, that some thought this an incredible matter; and indeed the number of these were and still are not a few. When St. Paul preach'd this Doctrine at *Athens*, we read that *certain Philosophers of the Epicureans and Stoicks encounter'd him, saying, What will this Babler say? Other some, that he seemeth to be a Setter-forth of strange Doctrine, in preaching Christ and the Resurrection,* Act. 17. 18. And verse 32. *When they heard of the Resurrection of the Dead, some mocked, and others said, we will hear thee again of this matter.* Again we read of others, who understood by a Resurrection, only a spiritual Translation from a State of Nature to a State of Grace, and therefore affirm'd the *Resurrection to be past already,* and derided those that talk'd or look'd for any other. The *Sadduces* of old flatly deny'd a Resurrection, and there are many still, who are but too much Scepticks and Infidels in this Article.

But what is it that makes this Doctrine so incredible, after so clear an Instance of it in Christ's Resurrection? Why,

1. Some

1. Some tell us, that Christ's Body was never corrupted, but only deposited a while in the Sepulchre; and the Parts of it being still kept together, might be more easily suppos'd to revive, whereas ours at the Dissolution are crumbl'd into Dust and Ashes, and are after so scatter'd and confounded with other Dust, that 'tis not to be conceiv'd how they should come together and unite again.

But is this too difficult or impossible to an infinite Power? The several corrupted Parts of our Bodies, tho dispers'd and mingled with other Dust of the Earth, are not annihilated, but are still in being; and is it any Difficulty to Infinite Knowledge to discover where they are, or to an Infinite Power to call them together? Is it more difficult to bring the several Parts of created Matter together again, than it was at first to make them all out of nothing? Indeed if this were ascrib'd to any limited or finite Agents either Angels or Men, it might then well enough seem incredible, for they can neither preserve nor restore a thing from Corruption; they neither know where the Parts are, nor how to put them together. But why should it be thought incredible for a God of infinite Power and Wisdom, to whom nothing is impossible, to do this? Is it harder to restore Life, than it was at first to give it? Or is the Task greater to reunite something, than to make all things out of nothing?

2ly. But our Bodies (say others) both before and after the Dissolution, undergo many Changes and Alterations; one Man eats and devours another, whereby the same Substance belongs to and composes many Bodies, and the Parts of one Man become successively the Parts of another: and how can every one at the Resurrection have his own Body? To which I answer,

1. That whatever Changes or Transmutations our Bodies may undergo, the several Parts of particular Bodies do not perish, or come to nothing by the Change, but are preserv'd and laid up in the Repositories of Nature: and an All-seeing Eye that knows and discerns all things, and an Almighty Hand that can do whatever pleases him, can easily discover and rally these things at pleasure; and therefore our Saviour told the Sadduces, that they err'd in this point, by *not knowing the Scriptures nor the Power of God*, Mat. 22. 29. They consider'd not that he who made all things, was able to direct, separate, and call all things together when it pleaseth him; they measur'd the Divine Power by their own Weakness, and by that means ignorantly concluded a thing im-

possible to God, because it was beyond their Sphere to effect or comprehend it. Whereas a due Consideration of the Omniscient and Omnipotent Power of God, to whom nothing is impossible, would scatter all these Doubts, and make these seeming Difficulties vanish.

2. Beside, To the Resurrection of the same Body, 'tis not necessary that all the Parts of the same Matter, but that the same Person should arise: Now you know a Man is the same Person from his Infancy to old Age, and even to the hour of his Dissolution, tho the Matter of which he consists hath admitted of many Changes and Alterations; for many parts of that continually fly off by Excretion, Sweat, Perspiration, and other natural Evacuations, which are again supply'd by the accession of new Nourishment and Digestion: and these make no alteration of the Person, tho they make some change in the Addition or Diminution of the matter. 'Tis the Soul and the Body that individuate the Person; and in the Union of these two essential Parts does Life consist, which Union is dissolv'd by Death, and is restor'd again by the Resurrection: so that we may easily conceive a rising again in the same Body, tho not in all the same matter, whereby we are numerically the same Persons for substance, tho some accidental Parts may vary; which is sufficient to all the Ends of the Resurrection, and likewise to all the Rewards and Punishments that follow after it. From whence I proceed,

Thirdly, To consider the Certainty of it, notwithstanding any seeming Incredibility. Now this Certainty is founded chiefly on Divine Revelation, back'd with many Arguments from Reason, and other Instances in Nature to confirm it.

As for Revelation, 'tis abundantly confirm'd to us by Divine Authority, both in the Old and New Testament. Our Blessed Saviour silenc'd the *Sadduces* who deny'd this Article, with those words of God Almighty, *I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob; God is not the God of the Dead, but of the Living.* The Force of which Argument lay in the Promise made to those Fathers, which being not made good in their Life time, they were to be rais'd to another Life, in which they should receive it. Holy *Job* declares his Assurance of a Resurrection in those words; *I know that my Redeemer liveth, and tho after my Skin worms destroy this Body, yet in my Flesh shall I see God, whom I shall see for my self and not another.* In the New Testament we find

our Saviour declaring himself to be the Resurrection and the Life, and that he that believeth in him, tho he were dead shall yet live again, John 11. 25. In the 5th of John 28, 29. he tells us, that the hour is coming, in which all that are in the Grave shall hear his Voice and come forth; they that have done Good to the Resurrection of Life, and they that have done Evil to the Resurrection of Damnation. By this means our last Enemy will be destroy'd; and Death which swallows up all other things, shall it self be swallow'd up in Victory, 1 Cor. 15. 53, 54.

But beside the ample Testimony of Holy Scripture, Reason it self may teach us this Truth; for since the Rewards of Vertue, and the Punishments of Vice, are not distributed in this Life, where good Men are afflicted, and the Ungodly prosper, it follows that there must be another, in which these things will be set right, and Justice done to both. Yea, all these Arguments before alledg'd for a future Judgment, plainly suppose and prove a Resurrection.

Furthermore, the daily course of Nature affords us many Instances and Resemblances of the Resurrection. The Day dies away into Night, and revives again the next Morning: The Summer dies into Winter, and revives again in the Spring: The Corn that sustains us is first buried, and then rises again; and *that which thou sowest, is not quicken'd except it die.* Thus all things are continued by corrupting, and revive by dying. And therefore we may safely conclude, that Man, the noblest of all Creatures, for whom all things else were made, shall not perish by Death, but be renew'd by a Resurrection.

Having seen the Certainty, let us observe the Manner of the Resurrection: and this we are told will be effected wholly by the Power of God, and the Influence of his Holy Spirit; for nothing less than a Divine and Omnipotent Power is sufficient for this Work, and that is abundantly able to effect it: and therefore the Apostle would have none think it incredible that God should raise the Dead; for he that gave Life at first, can as easily restore it; and our Bodies may be as well repair'd out of the former Materials, as at first form'd out of Nothing: He that breath'd Life into all Things, can easily inspire our scatter'd Dust; and the Spirit that rais'd up Christ from the Dead, can also quicken our mortal Bodies. If that Spirit of God dwell in us, we have the Seed and Power of the Resurrection, which will in time come into act and spring

bring up into Immortality. Our Bodies being made the Temples of the Holy Ghost, are become the Seat of God, and the Residence of a Divine Spirit; and therefore tho they be destroy'd awhile, they will in a little time be rais'd and rebuilt again.

But what will be the Effect and Issue of the Resurrection? Why, the Apostle tells us, that Christ will *change our vile Bodies, that they may be like unto his Glorious Body, according to the mighty working whereby he is able to subdue all things to himself*: Meaning, that our Bodies shall receive a most blessed Change, and from crazy, frail and imperfect Bodys, become like the Glorified Body of Christ. St. Paul in 1 Cor. 15. hath given us some Particulars of this happy Change, telling us,

1. That our Bodies, which by Death are *sown in Corruption, shall be rais'd again in Incorruption, and this Mortal shall put on Immortality*, ver. 42, 53. that is, Tho our Bodies here consist of those jarring and contrary Qualities, which naturally draw on Death and Dissolution, and after that have nothing but the Seeds and Principles of Corruption; yet they shall be rais'd to an Immortal State, in which all corruptible Principles shall be done away, and they shall suffer, grieve, and die no more, Luke 20. 36. Again,

2. The Body that is by Death *sown in Dishonour, will be rais'd in Glory*, ver. 43. that is, Tho it be put into the Grave as a vile abject thing, not to be endur'd above-ground, yet at the Resurrection it shall come forth a Glorious Body, and appear in a bright, beautiful and splendid Form; for so we read, that *the Righteous shall shine forth as the Sun in the Kingdom of the Father*, Mat. 13. 43. Moreover,

3. The Body that *is sown in Weakness, will be rais'd in Power*, ver. 43. meaning, That whereas we are liable here to many Sicknesses and Infirmities, our Constitution being so frail and crazy, that every thing we receive or meet with, is apt to annoy and offend us, we shall hereafter be rais'd impassible, and nothing shall ail us any more.

Lastly, What is *sown a Natural, shall be rais'd a Spiritual Body*, ver. 44. by which we are to understand, not that our Bodies shall be divested of all Matter, and chang'd into Spirits, but that they shall in a great measure be freed from the burdensom clog and dulness of Matter, and attain to the perfections of a spiritual Substance; that is, they shall be above the Pleasures of Sense, and
be

be like the Angels in Heaven, *Matth. 22. 30.* fasting forever without hunger, and watching without any need or desire of Refreshment. Again, they shall be vigorous and active, fitted to the quick and nimble Motions of Glorified Souls, like them living for ever without decay, and acting for ever without weariness. In a word, the Body shall be perfectly releas'd from all dolorous Pain and Passions, and continue in perfect Health, Strength and Vigor for ever.

Now the belief of such a Resurrection may teach us,

1. To live in a continual expectation and preparation for it, by avoiding all the Pollution of sinful Lust, and preserving all manner of Purity both of Body and Mind; for *he that hath this Hope, must purify himself even as God is pure.*

2. The belief of a Resurrection may serve to arm us against Sickness, and the fear of Death; for what tho our Bodies are beset here with divers Diseases, and sundry kinds of Death, it will not be long e'er they shall be plac'd out of the reach, and advanc'd above the assaults of both: *We know (says the Apostle) that when the earthly House of this Tabernacle shall be dissolv'd, we have a Building of God, a House not made with hands, but Eternal in the Heavens, 2 Cor. 5. 1, 2.* This made that great Apostle so far from being afraid, that he desir'd to be dissolv'd; and even long'd to be uncloth'd of this mortal Body, that he might put on Glory and Incorruption: and if we weigh the Pains and Miseries of this Life, with the Joys and Glories of the next, we may easily learn to do the same.

3. The Belief of a Resurrection may comfort us upon the Death of Friends and Relations; for their Bodies do not perish, but only sleep in the Dust, and shall shortly awake far more perfect and glorious than they were before. *When I awake (says the Psalmist) I shall be satisfy'd with thy Likeness:* and 'twill be no small Pleasure and Satisfaction to find our selves and Friends transform'd into it. And therefore the Apostle would not have us ignorant concerning them that are asleep, nor sorrow for them as those that have no Hope; for if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also that sleep in Jesus will God bring with him, *1 Thess. 4. 13, 14.* The Grave is only become the Repository of our Bodies, where we retire awhile to put off the Rags of sinful Flesh, to be cloth'd upon with the Robes of Immortality: And shall we mourn at our Friends withdrawing awhile to this noble Purpose? this is to repine at their Happiness, and to grieve they had not
always

always continued miserable: Which being the murmuring Language of all immoderate Sorrow, let us, by a stedfast belief of a Resurrection, learn to hush and silence it.

DISCOURSE XXVII.

Matth. 25. 46. *And these shall go away into Everlasting Punishment; but the Righteous into Life Eternal.*

FROM the Resurrection of the Body, I proceed to what will follow after it, and that is contain'd in the last Article of our Creed, *The Life Everlasting*: In which we profess to believe a future eternal State of Happiness or Misery, to which all Men will be sentenc'd at the last Day. For as there will be a *Resurrection both of the Just and the Unjust*; so there will be an *Everlasting Life* assign'd to both: and tho' *Life Everlasting* be for the most part us'd in Scripture for the Reward and Portion of the Righteous, yet here it hath a larger sense, and signifies a State of everlasting Continuance belonging to all Men, either in Wo or Weal; both which are plainly held forth to us in the words of the Text, *These shall go into Everlasting Punishment, and the Righteous into Life Eternal*: Where we have the two different States of Good men and Bad in the World to come, the one of endless Wo and Misery, the other of Eternal Bliss and Happiness; both which being fully reveal'd to us in the Holy Scripture, are firmly to be believ'd by all Christians.

I begin then with the *First* of them, viz. The endless and miserable Condition of the Wicked; *These shall go into Everlasting Punishment*. Where the misery of their Condition is express'd by *Punishment*, and the height of it imply'd in its being *Everlasting*. Now Punishment (you know) imports something that is grievous, inflicted as the demerit of a Crime; and according to the degrees of Guilt, and heinousness in the Offence, does the severity and duration of the Punishment increase. Accordingly therefore impenitent Sinners having all their lifetime affronted God by a wilful violation of his Laws, and leaving this World without a due sense and sorrow for the Evil of their Ways, will be doom'd in

in the next to the sorest and severest Punishment, imply'd in that doleful Sentence then to be pronounc'd against them; *Depart from me ye cursed into Everlasting Fire, prepar'd for the Devil and his Angels:* Their continuance in which State is seldom or never express'd by *Life Everlasting*, which is generally taken in the best sense; but very often by *Everlasting Death*, and here by *Everlasting Punishment*. Now the Punishment assign'd to the Wicked after the Resurrection, will be double, express'd usually by *Pœna Damni*, and *Pœna Sensus*, the Punishment of Loss, and the Punishment of Sense. The

Former consists in what they will be depriv'd of; the latter of what they must endure. For the

First, Their Loss will be unspeakable, for they will be depriv'd of all that is Good, or may any way conduce to their ease and happiness; because all Blessedness is contain'd in God, and communicated from him, they shall be banish'd from his Sight and Presence, and bid for ever to *depart* from him. Since nothing more revives and ravishes our Spirits than good Company; and the Society of Saints and Angels, and the Spirits of just Men made perfect, make up a great part of the Happiness of Heaven; they shall be wholly depriv'd of it, and made to take up their abode only with the accursed Fiends of Darknes: In a word, all things that are any way lovely or desirable, will be for ever remov'd and kept from them. But beside this Punishment of Loss, which is unspeakable, there is

2ly, A Punishment of Sense, which will be intolerable; and this will consist in the sensible enduring of the most racking and tormenting Pains both in Body and Soul. As for their Bodies, they will be still frying in the Flames, and feel all those Torments that can be endur'd from the hottest Fire; for we read, *They shall be cast into a Furnace of Fire*, Mat. 13. 42. and *have their part in the Lake that burneth with Fire and Brimstone*, Rev. 21. 8. in which they will not find so much as the cold comfort of a drop of Water to cool their Tongue when 'tis tormented in the Flame; nor the poor relief of shifting Sides, or changing Posture, being bound hand and foot, and unable to move in this Lake of Brimstone, Mat. 22. 13. These and far more exquisite Tortures than can be express'd, will betide the Bodies of the Damned: but their Souls will feel more acute and tormenting Pains than these, for they shall be fill'd with unconceivable Horror and Despair; the vexatious Passions of Envy, Hatred and Malice, like so many

Furies, will continually rack their guilty Breasts; a Worm will be still gnawing upon their Consciences, and sting them with the most bitter Anguish and Remorse: The Wrath of God will abide upon them, and his Fury be still flaming out upon their Soul, which will be infinitely more sensible and tender than the Apple of an Eye. Such a wounded Spirit (says Solomon) who can bear? 'Tis the Spirit of a Man that can alone sustain his Infirmities, and if that be wounded the main Prop fails, and then nothing can keep it from sinking into the Gulf of Horror and Despair. In short, the Punishment here allotted and consign'd to the Wicked, will consist in the unexpressible and insufferable Torments both of Body and Mind.

But that which gives the greatest Sting and Bitterness to them, is the eternal and never-ceasing Duration of them; the Fire that flames about, and scorches their Bodies, is *everlasting*, 'twill be ever burning, and yet never consume them: the Worm that afflicts their Conscience is immortal, 'twill be ever gnawing, and yet never lose its Sting; for so we read, *The Worm dies not, and the Fire is not quench'd*, Mark 9. 44. The Sentence is, *Depart ye cursed into everlasting Fire*; and because vile and wretched Company instead of easing, do but encrease the Torment, 'tis added, *Prepar'd for the Devil and his Angels*: because Darkness makes any Place or Condition the more doleful and disconsolate, by suggesting nothing but Fears and Terrors to the Mind, therefore their Doom will be, to be *cast into outer Darkness*; and lest they should find any Relief from the Hopes of a Deliverance, they are reserv'd unto Blackness of Darkness for ever, 2 Pet. 2. 1. This is the *everlasting Punishment* that the wicked shall go into, which will be endless, easeless, and remediless.

Secondly, We are to consider the happy and blest Estate of the righteous, they shall go into *Life Eternal*; where their Happiness is express'd by *Life*, and the Greatness of it by its being *Eternal*.

For the First, As the Condition of the wicked is describ'd by *Death*, the greatest of all Punishments; so the State of the righteous is represented by *Life*, the greatest of all Blessings: And this is a fit Emblem to represent that blessed State, in which they shall live with God in all the Happiness that their Hearts can wish, or their Natures be capable of; for they shall always see and enjoy God, the Fountain of all Good, in whose Presence

Second Part of the Church-Catechism.

315

is fulness of Joy, and at whose Right Hand are Pleasures for evermore. Again,

They shall live, as in the Presence of God, so in the blessed Society of Saints, and Angels, and glorified Spirits, with whom they shall converse for ever with the most intire Intercourse and Affection. Moreover,

The Righteous in this future State shall be compleatly happy both in Body and Soul. As for their Bodies, they shall be totally free from all those Pains, Aches and Infirmities that so much annoy and afflict them here: *They shall hunger and thirst no more; God shall wipe away all Tears from their Eyes; there shall be no more Death, nor Sorrow, nor Crying, nor Pain; for all these former things are pass'd away.* Rev. 7. 16. & 21. 4.

And not only so, but they shall be rais'd perfect, sound, and glorious Bodies, intire in all their Parts, and consummate in all Perfections: Their Senses shall be gratify'd with the most delightful and agreeable Objects, express'd in Scripture by *Feasts, Banquets, and Marriage-Entertainments*; the most joyful Hallelujahs, and Songs of Triumph, shall be still sounding in their Ears, their Eyes shall behold nothing but the most beautiful and transporting Objects, viz. the Glory and Magnificence of the Heavenly Throne, together with the splendor of all the Heavenly Host that surround it. But the Happiness that will betide their Souls, will far transcend all this; for this noble Part will be exalted to the utmost Perfection and Capacity of all its Faculties.

The Understanding will be not only secur'd from all Error, Ignorance and Doubtfulness, but fill'd brim-full of Knowledge, and the clearest Light will be still shining out upon the Mind. *Now we see as in a Glass darkly, but then face to face; now we know in part, but then shall we know even as we are known,* 1 Cor. 13. 12.

The Will shall be rectify'd to an exact Conformity to the Will of God; so that its Choice and Inclination will be wholly turn'd from Evil, and its Freedom determin'd only to the chiefest Good; 'twill love and delight only in God, and be wholly taken up with the Joy and Satisfaction that arises from Divine and Heavenly Objects. By this the *Spirits of just Men will be made perfect*, being advanc'd in Holiness, and excelling in all the Vertues and Graces of God's Holy Spirit: in this blisful State, all Defects, Weaknesses and Imperfections vanish; for *when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.* In a

word, This transporting Vision and Injoyment of God will transform them into the same Image from Glory to Glory; for so the Apostle assures us, *When he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is,* 1 John 3. 2.

This is in brief the Life which the Righteous shall enter into; which is not barely a natural Life consisting in the Union of the Soul to the Body, for that will happen to the Reprobate likewise; but Spiritual consisting in the Union of the Soul unto God: in which sense our Saviour speaks, *He that hath the Son, hath Life*; and this is in a more special manner call'd *Life*, because of the Comfort and Happiness that attends it; for *non tam vivere quam valere vita est*.

2ly. But that which crowns and compleats the Happiness of this *Life*, is the Duration of it, that 'tis no fading transitory thing, limited to a term of Years or Ages; but 'tis an *Eternal Life*.

This is plainly held forth to us in Holy Scripture, where 'tis express'd sometimes by *Eternal Glory*, *Eternal Salvation*, an *Eternal Inheritance*, that is *incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away*: Sometimes 'tis describ'd by a *continuing City*, *everlasting Habitations*, and a *House Eternal in the Heavens*: and at other times 'tis call'd a *Kingdom that cannot be moved*, an *Everlasting Kingdom*, an *Incorruptible Crown*, an *exceeding and eternal weight of Glory*. All which Expressions signify to us, that this future Life will know no end or decay, but is coeval with God himself, and will last to all Eternity. 'Tis the disgrace of all earthly Felicity, that 'tis short-liv'd and perishing, like a Vapour appearing for a while, and then vanishing away; whereas the Happiness of this future State is permanent and everlasting, an *Eternal Life of Bliss and Glory*.

And thus we see both the Sense and the Truth of this last Article. But what Influence ought it to have upon our Minds and Conversations? Why,

1. The belief of an *Everlasting Life* should deter Men from the Love and Practice of Sin, which lead to an Eternity of Wo and Torment; *The Wages of Sin is Death*. 'Twas this brought Death upon Mankind, and first caus'd a Separation between Soul and Body; and this, if not repented of, will bring on a second and a worse Death, to wit, an *Eternal Separation of Soul and Body from God*: and as *in his Presence is fulness of Joy*, so the being banish'd from it is the very height of Misery and Damnation. Nothing.

Nothing but Sin can bring us to this forlorn Condition, and thither Sin will assuredly bring us, if not timely forsaken and prevented: If we cherish this Viper in our Bosom, 'twill breed there a *Worm of Conscience that never dies*; and the impure Flames of Lust will kindle that *Fire that will never be quenched*. And *who among us can dwell with the devouring Fire? who can dwell with everlasting Burnings?* And who that believes the intolerable and irremediable Misery of that State, would not take any pains to prevent it?

2. The belief of future Eternal Torments may satisfy us of the infinite and impartial Justice of God against Sin and Sinners, and likewise teach us to live in a continual awe and dread of it. 'Tis the vain Presumption of some Men, that God is a Being made up wholly of Mercy and Goodness, that his Bowels of Compassion will not suffer him to damn and destroy his own Creatures, and much less to punish the short temporary Acts of Sin with endless and insupportable Torments; this makes some Men secure, and to cast off the Fear of God from before their Eyes: but be not deceiv'd, God will not be mocked. When he proclaim'd his Name to the World, he made ample mention indeed of his Mercy and Goodness, stiling himself *a God gracious and merciful, long-suffering, abundant in Goodness and Truth, pardoning Iniquity, Transgression and Sin*: but yet he did not forget to mention his Justice; for 'tis added, *that he will by no means clear the Guilty, but will visit the Iniquity of the Fathers upon the Children to the third and fourth Generation*, Exod. 34. 6, 7. Hence we find him stiling himself *a jealous God, and a consuming Fire*, to teach us to stand in awe of him, and to tremble at his Word. To banish all Security, we are often told of *the fierceness of his Wrath*: And our Saviour hath warn'd us to *fear him, who is able to cast both Soul and Body into Hell*, Mat. 10. 28.

3. The belief of an Everlasting Life of Bliss and Glory, should quicken us in our Duty, and make us despise all Difficulties in the way to it. The Hope of a Reward is a mighty spur and incitement to any Undertaking; and if the short perishing things of this Life are wont to draw so strongly, how much more powerfully should the Hopes of an Eternal Reward in Heaven move us forward in the ways of Vertue and Holiness? How lightly should we regard the Pleasures of Sin here, which are but for a season, in comparison of those Rivers of Pleasure that are at God's right Hand for evermore? Yea, this should teach us to despise all the
Sufferings

Sufferings of this present Life; and with the Apostle, reckon them not worthy to be nam'd with the Glory that shall be reveal'd in us.

Lastly, We may learn hence how to estimate the Price of our Redemption, and what a value we ought to set upon the Blood of Christ that purchas'd it; for hereby we are ransom'd from a wretched Thralldom to Sin and Satan, and translated into the glorious Liberty of the Sons of God: yea, we are freed by it from all the endless Miseries of Death and Hell, and instated in all the Happiness and Blessings of Eternal Life, which should set us still a longing and preparing for it, that having *our Fruit unto Holiness*, we may in the end receive *Everlasting Life*.

DISCOURSE XXVIII.

Heb. 1. 2. latter part. *By whom also he made the Worlds.*

FROM the Explication of the Creed, I proceed to the next Question of the Catechism, which contains a brief Recapitulation of the whole, in these words:

Quest. What dost thou chiefly learn by these Articles of thy Belief?

Answ. 1. *I learn to believe in God the Father, who made me and all the World.*

2. *In God the Son, who redeem'd me and all Mankind.*

3. *In God the Holy Ghost, who sanctifieth me and all the Elect People of God.*

In which Question and Answer we may observe,

First, A publick Profession of Faith in the Holy Trinity; I believe in God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost.

Secondly, The peculiar Acts or Offices ascrib'd to each Person in relation to Mankind. And they are,

Creation to the Father, *who made me and all the World.*

Redemption to the Son, *who redeem'd me and all Mankind.*

Sanctification to the Holy Ghost, *who sanctified me, and all the Elect People of God.*

All

Second Part of the Church-Catechism.

219

All which being great and important Truths, necessary to be known and believ'd by all Christians, must be distinctly and particularly handled. And,

First, For the publick Profession of Faith in the Holy Trinity : The Catechumen is here taught to declare his belief in God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost ; where in the same Divine Nature he acknowledges three distinct Persons, among whom there is a Difference of Order in an Equality of Power ; for the Father is ever reckon'd in the first place, and so stil'd with relation to the Son, who is said to be begotten of him : The Son is reckon'd in the second place, and so stil'd in relation to the Father, who is said to beget him : The Holy Ghost in the third place, because he proceeds from both.

This is the great adorable Mystery of the Christian Religion ; which being above the comprehension of Reason, is wholly made the Object of Faith, and to be receiv'd upon the Credit of Divine Revelation. 'Twas but obscurely reveal'd under the Old Testament, but more plainly in the New, where each of the Persons are frequently stil'd God, and have all the incommunicable Attributes and Properties of the Godhead ascrib'd to them : From whence this Doctrine of the Blessed Trinity hath been receiv'd in all Christian Churches. We all profess our Faith in it at our entrance upon Christianity, being all baptiz'd in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. As we grow up, we are catechiz'd and built up in this most Holy Faith, and promise never to depart from it to our lives end. The Apostolical Benediction with which we still conclude our Holy Offices, is in the Name of these three Divine Persons, saying, *The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Love of God the Father, and the Fellowship of the Holy Ghost, be with us all evermore.* The Hymns and Doxologies of the Church run in the like stile, *Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost :* Where all the three Persons in the Sacred Trinity are equally worship'd and glorify'd ; for so the Father himself commanded, *That all Men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father ; for he that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father that sent him,* John 5. 23. And in the Epistle to the *Hebrews* he saith, *And let all the Angels of God worship him,* Chap. 1. 6. And again, *To the Son he saith, Thy Throne, O God, is for ever and ever, a Scepter of Righteousness is the Scepter of thy Kingdom,* ver. 8. But St. John hath

hath yet more clearly reveal'd this Mystery to us, saying, *There are Three that bear Record in Heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; and these Three are One*, 1 Joh. 5. 7. where a Trinity of Persons is expressly asserted in the Unity of the Godhead: a Place so pregnant for the proof of this sublime Mystery, that St. *Jerom* conceives the Arians who deny'd the Divinity of Christ, expung'd these words out of the Bible, because they made so sore against them, which is the reason that those words are not to be found in some Copies. But thanks be to the Providence of God, which has preserv'd and deriv'd down to us the knowledg of the Eternal Trinity; and likewise given us Grace in the Power of the Divine Majesty, to worship the Unity. So that tho Reason be at a loss, and our weak Understandings cannot comprehend this ineffable Mystery, yet have we a firm Foundation for our Faith in it, being built upon the Basis of Divine Revelation, and the Discoveries that God hath been pleas'd to make to us of himself.

From whence we may learn to banish all Doubts, and firmly to believe and assent to this divine Truth; still worshipping the Trinity in Unity, and the Unity in Trinity, and praying, as our Church hath taught us, to be kept stedfast in this Faith, and not to be shaken from it by any Adversities. Let us not say with *Nicodemus*, *How can these things be?* but rather let us humbly admire and adore what we cannot fully understand. There are many things in Nature and Art that non-plus our Reason; and can we hope to comprehend all the Mysteries in Religion, or to know God himself to perfection? Is it not highly reasonable to believe what God hath told us of himself, and not to suffer our Curiosity to run beyond what he hath reveal'd? Let us therefore submit our Reason to Faith, and bound our Inquiries by the divine Revelation; having already a glimpse of this sublime Truth, let us be content to stay for a fuller Apprehension of it, till we come to behold the Glories, and partake of the Joys of this Trin-une Deity.

This is briefly the Profession of our Faith in the Holy Trinity, which we are all to hold fast unto the end without wavering. From which I go on,

2dly, To the particular Acts or Offices ascrib'd to each of the three Persons, in the Oeconomy of the World and Man's Salvation.

And

And 1. To God the Father, the first Person in the blessed Trinity, is ascrib'd the making of all Things; *I believe in God the Father* (saith the Catechumen) *who made me and all the World:* where he is taught to own God the Father for the Author of his Being, and the Maker of all the World. According to that of St. Luke, *In him we live, move, and have our Being.* 'Tis true, this is sometimes ascrib'd to the Son, as *John* 1. 3. where *all Things are said to be made by him;* and sometimes to the Holy Ghost, as *Job* 33. 4. where *the Spirit of God is said to make us.* But still the making of the World is first and principally attributed to God the Father, in respect of his priority of Order and Operation; he being the first Mover, with whom the other Persons are said to concur and work with him. Our Text tells us that *God made the World by his Son.* And elsewhere, The Father of Spirits is said by his Holy Spirit *to breathe into Man a living Soul;* this is the frequent Language of Holy Scripture, which declares the making of the World and all Things in it, as the peculiar Act and Office of God the Father.

To us (saith the Apostle) *there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all Things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him,* 1 Cor. 8. 6. And we find our Saviour acknowledging, *That the Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do;* which bespeaks some kind of Priority of Action, as well as Person. And in this sense, the Creed teaches us to *believe in God the Father, maker of Heaven and Earth.*

This is confirm'd to us in sundry places, both of the Old and New Testament. In the first of *Genesis* we read of God's making all Things, and saying that all that he had made was very good. *Nehemiah* acknowledges, *Thou, even thou art Lord alone; thou hast made Heaven, the Heaven of Heavens with all their Host, the Earth and all things that are in it, the Sea and all that is therein,* Neh. 9. 6. We find *David* acknowledging the same throughout the whole book of Psalms. St. Paul speaking of God the Father, often tells us, *that of him, and by him, and to him are all Things,* Rom. 11. 36. And the Author to the *Hebrews*, *that every House is builded by some Man, but he that built all Things is God,* Heb. 3. 4. 'Twere endless to recite all the Testimonies that might be alledg'd to this purpose.

But were the Scriptures silent in this matter, Reason it self would lead us up to a first Cause, as the Author and Maker of all Things, which can be no other than God: for whatsoever has

a being, was either made or not made; whatsoever is not made is God; whatsoever is not God, is made. Beside,

The wonderful Order, Beauty and Harmony of the World, the mutual dependance of one thing upon another, and of all upon a superior Being, can be ascrib'd only to an Alwise and Almighty Artificer. The admirable Frame and Fabrick of our Bodies, which have as many Wonders as Parts; the curious Contrivance and Composure of our Souls, which have as many Miracles as Facultys, plainly shew the finger of God. In short, all the Excellencies stamp'd upon the inferiour Creatures, which serve at once to excite our Wonder, and employ our Meditation, bespeak an Omnipotent Hand to make and preserve them; all which shew the World to be the Workmanship of God the Father, who made Heaven and Earth.

But how is God the Father said to have made the World, and all Things contain'd in it? Why,

That the Scripture tells us was by Creation; *Gen. 1. 1. In the beginning God created the Heavens and the Earth.* And the Church in the *Revelations* acknowledges, *Thou hast created all Things, and for thy Pleasure they are and were created,* *Rev. 4. 11.* Now Creation is the producing of something out of nothing; and that distinguisheth it from Generation, which evermore supposes some matter to work upon, whereas Creation excludes all Concurrence of matter, and signifies the making something out of nothing. Philosophy indeed teacheth that nothing can be made out of nothing; which is true of all finite and natural Agents, who must have some matter to work upon, or else they can do nothing.

But Divinity tells us, that all Things were made out of nothing, and that this is feasible and easy to an infinite Power. *St. Paul* tells us, that *God calleth things that be not, as tho they were;* that is, he maketh things to be, that before were not: and the Author to the *Hebrews*, *That things which are seen, were not made of things that do appear,* *Heb. 11. 3.* meaning, that things which are, were made of things that were not, that is of nothing. And by this God distinguisheth himself from the Gods of the Heathen, by doing that which none but he can do. Again,

2. He made all things by the word of his Power, that is, He spake them all into being by the word of his Mouth; he did but say, *Let there be Light, and there was Light; Let the Earth bring forth Grass after its kind, and let the Waters bring forth abundantly*
the

the Creatures that live and move therein, and things immediately were as he had said. 'Twas but for him to will and command, and it was so: so saith the Psalmist, he spake the word and they were made; He commanded, and they were created, Psal. 148. 5. And elsewhere, he made the Heavens by his Power, and the Host of them by the breath of his Mouth. Again,

3. For the Time: He is said to make all things in six Days, not that he needed so long a space for the doing of it, for he might have made them all in one Moment, as he did with one word of his Mouth; all things are possible, and nothing is difficult to an Almighty Power. But he took that time, to teach us Diligence and Deliberation in all our ways, and by his example to rest on the seventh Day from all our Labors.

Lastly, For the End: He made all things for his own Glory; so Solomon declares, *Prov. 16. 4. He made all Things for himself, yea even the wicked for the Day of Evil*: not that all or any of his Works can add to or diminish any thing from his essential Glory; but he design'd his Works to manifest and display his Glory to the Sons of Men, who are to take occasion from thence to magnify his Power, Wisdom and Goodness, which shine so brightly in them. *The Heavens (saith the Psalmist) declare the Glory of God, and the Firmament sheweth his handy Work.* Good Men by beholding the Beauty of the Creation, and the liberal Provision made for all the Creatures in it, will be thereby mov'd to publish and proclaim the goodness of our Maker; so we find *David*, that great Master of Thanksgivings, did almost in every Psalm. And upon wicked Men who forget God, and regard not the Operations of his Hand, he will glorify his Justice in their utter Confusion. We see then how well and wisely the Catechism teaches to believe in God the Father, who made us and all the World; which Act in the Language of Scripture and Antiquity is eminently and peculiarly ascrib'd to the first Person in the Holy Trinity.

Now from this Doctrine of the Creation we may learn many excellent and useful Lessons; I shall mention a few. And,

1. We are taught from hence to give God Almighty the Glory of all his Works, and to celebrate his infinite Power, Wisdom and Goodness, that are so visible and apparent in them. And this we are to do by frequent Meditation upon them; *Whoso is wise will ponder these Things, and he shall understand the loving-kindness of the Lord.* By extolling and admiring the Greatness of

them, saying, *Thy Mercy, O Lord, reacheth unto the Heavens, and thy Faithfulness to the Clouds*, Psal. 36. 5. By calling upon our selves and others, to *worship and fall down and kneel before the Lord our Maker*, Psal. 95. And lastly, by calling upon all inferiour Creatures to set forth the Praise and Glory of their great Creator; of all which the Psalmist hath set us the best and noblest Pattern for our Imitation. And the Elders in the *Revelations* have shew'd us the way, saying, *Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive Glory, and Honour, and Power; for thou hast created all Things, and for thy Pleasure they are and were created.*

2. From God's making us and all the World, we may learn to depend and rely upon him in all Conditions: for he that made us, is both able and willing to preserve us; he will not despise or cast off the works of his own Hand, but is ever ready to cherish and defend his own Children: *Commit thy way unto the Lord* (saith holy David) *and he will bring it to pass*; for happy is he whose hope is in the Lord his God, who made Heaven and Earth.

And this Happiness is grounded upon the Assurance we have of Safety and Security under his Protection; for there is no resisting an Almighty Power, nor any weakness or defect in an Omnipotent Agent. *My help cometh of the Lord* (saith David) *who made Heaven and Earth; he will not suffer thy Foot to be moved*, Psal. 121. 2, 3. He that made Heaven and Earth can overrule all the Creatures in it, and dash all the designs of our Enemies: he can fix our Feet on good Ground, and will make us live in safety, if we cast our selves upon his Providence. *Behold* (saith God) *I have created the Smith that bloweth the Coals in the Fire, and bringeth an Instrument for his Work.* And after that he assures Israel, *No weapon formed against thee shall prosper.* And lest this should be thought a peculiar Privilege confin'd to them only, he adds, *This is the Heritage of the Servants of the Lord*, Isa. 54. 16, 17. So that we may safely rely upon the Power and Goodness of God, whilst we walk in his way, and keep in the path of his Commandments. And this will lead me to the

Last and great Lesson to be learnt from this Doctrine, and that is the Duty of Obedience; which naturally flows from our Creation: for he that made us, hath certainly a Right to command us; and we that are made, have an indispensable Duty lying upon us to obey our Maker. 'Tis an Observation of a Father, that of all the Creatures that God made, none ever disobey'd his Voice, but the Devil and Man. All other Creatures observe the

the Laws of their Creation, and keep in the course and order that God hath set them. The Psalmist declares of the Heaven and the Earth, and all the Creatures in it, how they obey the Voice, and set forth the Praises of their Creator; yea, he tells us of the *Fire and Hail, Snow and Vapour, Wind and Storms fulfilling his Word*, Psal. 148. 8. And it must be a great Shame, if Man, who hath far greater Obligations to obey, and much nobler Faculties to set forth his Glory than any of the other Creatures, should yet come short of his Duty, and sink beneath the Beast that perisheth: This is enough not only to incense our Maker, but to cause the Heaven and the Earth and all Things in it to testify against us, and to condemn our Ingratitude; to prevent which, let us more frequently remember our Creator, and never cease thinking of him, till we have wrought our Hearts to a more cheerful, constant and universal Obedience to him.

DISCOURSE XXIX.

Titus 2. 14. *Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all Iniquity, and purify to himself a peculiar People, zealous of good Works.*

HAVING shew'd the Foundation of our Faith in the Holy Trinity; and likewise what our Creed teaches to believe of God the Father, the first Person in it, viz. *that he made us and all the World:*

I proceed in the next place, to what it teaches us to believe of God the Son, the second Person in the Blessed Trinity, and that is, *That he redeemed us and all Mankind.* Where, as Creation is appropriated to the Father; so is Redemption to the Son, of which therefore I shall treat from the words read; where the Apostle speaking of our Saviour Jesus Christ, saith, that *He gave himself for us, to redeem us, &c.*

In speaking to which words, as they relate to the Catechism, 'twill be necessary to consider,

1st. The Nature of Redemption, and in what sense Christ is said to be a Redeemer.

2^{dly}.

2dly. The Price of our Redemption, or what it cost to redeem us.

3dly. The Persons redeemed by him, and that is we and *all Mankind*.

Lastly, The end and design of his redeeming them, which was, to *purify to himself a peculiar People, zealous of good Works*.

For the Nature of Redemption; it is in its proper Notion, a second Buying, or a Buying back again of something, that was before alien'd, sold, or made away. And it relates chiefly to Persons, Times or Things.

The redeeming of Persons, is the releasing them from Bondage and Captivity: When any that have been taken Prisoners, or sold into Slavery, are by a certain sum of Money bought out of Thralldom, and restor'd to their former Liberty, they are then properly said to be redeem'd.

The redeeming of Time, is the repairing the loss of what is past by a double diligence in that which is to come. When any by looseness or laziness hath squandred away and mispent his Days, he is said to have lost his time; but when by a future care he hath employ'd it well, he is said to regain or redeem it.

The redeeming of Things, is the regaining a Title to Goods that were sold, or made away by Pawn, which when purchas'd and restor'd again, are said to be redeem'd.

This is briefly the nature of Redemption, which is never applied to the first buying, but always to the second purchase, or gaining a new Title in something that was lost and out of possession. By which we may learn, in what sense Christ is said to be our Redeemer; namely, by buying us out of the Hands of our Enemies, to whom we were in Bondage, and restoring us to the glorious Liberty of the Sons of God. This is ascrib'd sometimes to God the Father, who is said to *redeem Israel out of the Hands of their Enemies*, Mic. 4. 10. but more especially and frequently to God the Son, who is said to be *made unto us Wisdom and Righteousness, Sanctification and Redemption*, 1 Cor. 1. 30. For which Reason, he is every where in the New Testament stil'd our Saviour and Redeemer.

Now Christ's redeeming us implies, that we were before taken Captive, and sold under Sin, and so were in the Condition of Slaves: And likewise, that he hath bought us out of that Captivity, and instated us again in the Privileges of the Sons of God.

1. I say, Redemption supposes a former Bondage, Sale or Alienation, which is the natural State and Condition of all Mankind. Our Natures were alien'd from God in *Adam*, by whose disobedience all Men were made Sinners, and so lay under the power and guilt of the first Transgression. What is said of *Ahab*, that he sold himself to work Wickedness, 1 Kings 21. 25. is in some sense true of all Mankind, they sold themselves to Sin and Satan, and thereby became miserable bond-slaves unto both: So St. Paul speaks of all unregenerate Men, that they are Carnal and sold under Sin, Rom. 7. 14. In which natural Estate, he tells us they are aliens from the Commonwealth of Israel, strangers to the Covenant of Promise, without God, and without hope in the World.

But 2. A deliverance from this wretched Captivity is the Redemption here ascrib'd to God the Son, the second Person in the Holy Trinity, who hath rescu'd us from the vassalage we were in to Sin and Satan, and restor'd us to the Liberty and Happiness of the Sons of God. In the Text he is said to *redeem us from all Iniquity*, that is, from the Power that Sin had over us, and from the Punishment it render'd us liable unto: Inasmuch that Sin shall no longer reign in our mortal Bodies, nor Satan have any Dominion over us. And being thus made free from Sin, we are become the Servants of Righteousness.

But, Secondly, what was the Price of our Redemption; or what did God the Son give to redeem us? Why, our Text tells us, *He gave himself for us*, that is, he laid down his Life, and shed his Blood for us: So saith the Prophet, *He made his Soul an Offering for Sin*, Isa. 53. And the Evangelist, *He gave his Life a Ransom for many*, Mat. 10. 28. A great and invaluable Price this, one drop of his most precious Blood being of more worth than all the World: And yet nothing less than this was of sufficient Value to purchase it, for *without shedding of Blood there was no Remission*; and therefore the Blood of our Saviour must go for it, to obtain Eternal Redemption for us: and *Death being the Wages of Sin*, there could be no Redemption from it without the Death of the Redeemer. *Silver and Gold* (as St. Peter tells us) being earthly and corruptible things, were no valuable Consideration for heavenly and immortal Souls: *It cost more to redeem a Soul* (says holy David) *and therefore that must be let alone for ever*, Psal. 49. 8. Nothing less than the precious Blood of Christ as a Lamb without blemish, and without spot, 1 Pet. 1. 18. was sufficient to effect it.

But

But was the Blood of one Person, one single Lamb, a valuable Compensation for the Sins of the whole World? Yes, of such a Lamb as this was, the like whereof never was, or can be; for he was a Lamb that never went astray, *a Lamb without the least spot or blemish*, yea, *the Lamb of God* that was design'd from all Eternity to *take away the Sins of the World*. But above all, he was not only *Agnus Dei*, but *Agnus Deus*; not only the Lamb of God, but this Lamb himself was God, *God blessed for evermore*. So that the Blood of this Lamb was indeed the Blood of God, of which we read *Acts 20. 28*. And that must put such an infinite Value and Dignity into it, as to make it an infinite Price of infinite Merit, and consequently able to satisfy an infinite Justice, and to appease an infinite Wrath. This was, in short, the Price which God the Son paid for our Redemption; to which the Apostle refers, in saying, *Ye are bought with a Price*, 1 Cor. 6. 20. namely, the invaluable Price of Christ's Blood, *who gave himself for us*. But,

Thirdly, Who are the Persons thus bought and redeem'd by God the Son, the Second Person in the ever-blessed Trinity? Why, That the Catechism teaches every one to believe; First, singly and particularly of himself, *He redeem'd me*; and, 2ly, more generally and in the lump, *of all Mankind*.

1. I say, every one is here taught to apply this Redemption singly and particularly to himself, saying, *He redeem'd me*. For this we have the Example of *St. Paul*, who says, *He gave himself for me*, Gal. 2. 20. Which being a matter of vast Concernment and Comfort to us, every one is by Faith to bring it home and apply it to himself. For as the highest Cordial can be of no use or advantage, unless taken in and receiv'd by every single Person; so neither can the Doctrine of Redemption by Jesus Christ administer any Consolation, without a due and particular Application of it to our selves, believing and saying, *He redeemed me*. But yet,

Our Faith herein is not to be confin'd to our selves, nor limited to a few, but must extend to all Men; for we are here taught to believe, that *he redeemed me and all Mankind*. So *St. Paul* likewise teaches, *He gave himself a Ransom for all*, 1 Tim. 2. 6. This is the frequent Language of the Holy Scripture. *St. John* the Baptist usher'd the Son of God into the World, with *Ecce Agnus Dei*, *Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the Sins of the World*.

And St. John the Evangelist declares, That God *so loved the World,* that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have Everlasting Life, 1 John 3. 16. where the Love of God in sending his Son for our Redemption, is extended to the whole World, and the Promise of Salvation by him is general to all Believers. The same is more expressly deliver'd by the same Apostle; *If any Man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous: And he is the Propitiation for our Sins, and not for ours only, but also for the Sins of the whole World,* 1 John 2. 1, 2. meaning, that Christ hath made a sufficient Atonement for the Sins of all Mankind, by which they are deliver'd from a necessity of perishing, and put in a condition of being eternally Happy. To the same purpose speaks St. Paul, 1 Tim. 4. 10. *Christ is the Saviour of all Men, especially of those that believe:* And lest we should think any to be excluded from this Mercy, he says, 1 Tim. 1. 15. *This is a faithful Saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the World to save Sinners.* The Author to the Hebrews tells us, Chap. 2. 9. That he *tasted Death for every Man.* Yea, St. Peter extends his Redemption to his very Enemies, for he bought those that denied him, tho they afterward denied the Lord that bought them.

By all which, and many more places that might be produc'd to the same purpose, 'tis evident that God's Mercy is over all his Works, and that Christ's Love is not so narrow and confin'd as some would make it, but reaches all Mankind, and that he gave himself a Ransom for all. But here it may be ask'd,

If Christ redeem'd and died for all, how comes it to pass that all are not saved? Why,

That proceeds not from any defect in Christ's Satisfaction, nor yet from any want of Love in him, by denying to any the Virtue and Merits of it, but from Mens being wanting to themselves, in refusing the Terms upon which it is offer'd to them; his Merits and Atonement are sufficient for all, tho they are effectual only to such as by Faith lay hold of them: for the Promises of Redemption and Salvation by Jesus Christ, are not Absolute but Conditional, and none but they who observe the Conditions of Faith and Repentance upon which they are tender'd, can receive any benefit by them. Christ's dying for our Sins will be effectual only to those that die to them; for he gave himself to redeem us *from all Iniquity*, not to purchase for us a Licence or Indulgence *in any.* In short, our Blessed Redeemer hath remov'd

all Obstacles, and put all Men in a way and possibility of Salvation; so that they all may be saved if they please, and if any miscarry 'tis thro their own Default, and their Destruction is of themselves.

I have insisted a little longer on this, to shew the Error of those who would confine the Mercy and Merits of Christ only to a few selected from all Eternity to Everlasting Life, and doom all others by a fatal Decree to eternal and unavoidable Damnation; which Doctrine highly derogates from the Goodness of God, and drives many to despair, by shutting them out of all hopes of Mercy. Whereas our Catechism teaches every one that is baptiz'd to believe, that Christ redeem'd him and all Mankind; and the Holy Scriptures declare, that God is no respecter of Persons, but calls all Men to Repentance; that he delights not in the Death of a Sinner, and therefore decrees none to that miserable End; but having provided a sufficient Ransom and Satisfaction for all, wills them all to repent and be saved.

And this will lead me in the last place to the great End and Design of Christ's Redemption, and that is, *to purify to himself a peculiar People, zealous of good Works*. To purify, you know, is to purge a thing from the Dross and Defilement that sticks to it, and thereby to render it pure and clean: Thus Silver is said to be purify'd, when 'tis separated from the Dross; and Wine, when 'tis refin'd from the Dregs and Lees that mix with it. In like manner Christ's purifying of us, is his purging away the Dross and Pollution of Sin, and cleansing us from all Iniquity, to make us Pure and Holy to the Lord.

To purify *to himself a peculiar People*, is, 1. To separate them from the common Herd of Sinners, and to take them for his own. *Hesychius* renders *λαός περιόσιος* here a purchased People, such as are become Christ's Peculiar by a right of Purchase; as he that hath bought a thing, hath thereby made it his own Peculiar: So the Apostle told the *Corinthians*, *Ye are not your own, ye are bought with a Price*, 1 Cor. 6. 19, 20. Or,

2. By a *peculiar People* here, is meant a choice and dearly-beloved People; as what is a Man's own is near and dear to him, so *Phavorinus* renders *λαός περιόσιος*, by *λαίς περιποίητος*, a Darling and much-made of People: so the Jews of old were said to be God's peculiar People, because he singled them out of the rest of the World, to set his Love and Favour upon them, calling them
his

his Treasure, his Jewels, and making them his Care, and the Darling of his Affection ; but Christ by giving himself for us, hath enlarg'd his Bowels, and taken the Gentiles likewise into the number of his Elect and peculiar People ; which Favour they are to own and express by an exemplary Piety, and by being *zealous of good Works*. This St. Peter declares and presses upon us at large in the 1st Epistle, chap. 2. ver. 9. where he styles us *a Chosen Generation*, that is, selected to himself for a Possession ; *a Royal Priesthood*, set apart and consecrated to the daily Service of God ; *a Holy Nation*, sanctified and called to every good Word and Work ; *a Peculiar People*, taken into a nearer Relation unto God, to imitate him in good Works, and to raise us to the highest pitch of Piety and Vertue ; and all this, *to shew forth the Praises of him who hath called us out of Darknes into his marvelous Light*.

That this was the great End of Christ's redeeming us from the Power of Sin and Satan, is evident from the Prayer of Zachary, who beg'd of God, *That he would grant that we being deliver'd out of the hands of our Enemies, might serve him without fear, in Holiness and Righteousness, all the days of our Life*, Luke 1. 74, 75. And more fully by St. Paul, who tells the Ephesians, *That Christ gave himself for his Church, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of Water by the Word, that he might present it to himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing ; but that it should be holy and without blemish*, Ephes. 5. 24, 25, 26. Yea, this was the End of the Son of God's coming into the World, and of all that he did and suffer'd in it, *to redeem us from our vain Conversation, receiv'd by Tradition from our Fathers ; and that by his own most precious Blood, which was alone able to effect so great a Work*.

Thus we see the Nature, the End, and the Design of our Redemption, which was not that we should wallow in Sin and live as we list ; but that we should so purify our selves as to become a peculiar People zealous of good Works. We see likewise the Persons for whom this Redemption is wrought, and that is for all Mankind, together with the Price that was paid for it, which was no less than the invaluable Blood of the Son of God.

That which we are to learn from hence, may be briefly sum'd up in these three things.

1. The great Duty of Thankfulness : To God the Father in the first place for sending his Son upon this Errand into the World. Next, to God the Son, for undertaking and accomplishing it for

us. And likewise to God the Holy Ghost for applying it to us, and sealing us up to this Day of Redemption. Let them give thanks (says the Psalmist) whom the Lord hath redeemed, and deliver'd from the hand of the Enemy; Psal. 107. 2. Not from Temporal Enemies alone, who can only kill the Body; but from spiritual and cruel Enemies, who seek to damn and destroy the Soul. This should fill our Hearts with Joy, and our Mouths with the Praises of our Redeemer, evermore saying, as we are taught in our daily Prayers, *Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, who hath visited and redeemed his People*, Luke 1. 68. If a Redemption of our Bodies from the Bondage of *Egypt*, or the Slavery of *Turky*, be apt to leave lasting Impressions of Duty and Thankfulness to our Deliverer: What Extasies of Joy and Gratitude are due for a much greater Redemption of our Souls from the Powers of Death and Hell? especially considering the freeness and undeservedness of God's Goodness herein, being brought to pass without any knowledge or concurrence of ours; for tho' it cost our Saviour dear, yet it comes freely to us without Mony or Merit. Add to this the Largeness and Extent of this Redemption, which is sufficient for, and offer'd to all Mankind; none are excluded from the Benefit of it, that will but fit themselves for it, and are willing to receive it: which may and ought to excite in us the highest degrees of Gratitude, and fill our Mouths with Songs of Thanksgiving.

2. We may learn hence to put our trust and confidence as in God the Father our Almighty and Faithful Creator, so in God the Son our Allsufficient Saviour and Redeemer. We can't doubt his Ability to save us, who hath all Power both in Heaven and Earth: Nor need we question his readiness to redeem us, who hath shed his Blood, and laid down his Life to that end. We may now defy Satan and all Assaults, since Christ hath freed us from them. *O Israel, fear not* (says God) *for I have redeem'd thee*, Isa. 43. 1. We may now safely commit our selves unto God in well-doing, and say with *David*, *Into thy Hands I commend my Spirit, for thou hast redeem'd me, O Lord, thou God of Truth*, Psal. 31. 6.

Lastly, We may learn hence to serve, honour and worship our Redemer all the days of our Life: his Goodness deserves this from us, and Justice it self requires it, for *we are not our own, we are bought with a Price; therefore* (says the Apostle) *glorify God with your Souls and Bodies, which are his*. Let us live

no longer to our selves, but to him who hath so dearly bought us; and since he gave himself to redeem us from all Iniquity, let us purify our selves, and become a peculiar People unto him, zealous of good Works.

DISCOURSE XXX.

Rom. 15. 16. latter part. *Being sanctified by the Holy Ghost.*

I Shew'd in my last, the Nature and End of the great Work of our Redemption, which is peculiarly ascrib'd to God the Son, the Second Person in the Holy Trinity: I come now

In the Third place, to what the Creed teaches us to believe concerning God the Holy Ghost, the Third Person in the ever-blessed Trinity; and that is, That *he sanctified me, and all the Elect People of God.* Where, as Creation was before particularly attributed to God the Father, and Redemption to God the Son; so is Sanctification made the proper Work and Office of the Holy Ghost: And this is confirm'd to us by the Words of our Text, in which we are expressly said to *be sanctified by the Holy Ghost.* In treating whereof 'twill be requisite to shew,

First, The Nature of Sanctification, or what it is to be sanctified.

Secondly, That 'tis the peculiar Office of the Holy Ghost thus to sanctify.

Thirdly, The Persons whom he is said to sanctify, and they are *me, and all the Elect People of God.* I begin,

First, With the Nature of Sanctification, or what it is to sanctify. In answer to which we must know, that to sanctify, in general, is to make Holy: And according to the divers kinds of Holiness, there are different Notions and Degrees of Sanctification. For the clearing whereof, we must observe and distinguish a twofold Holiness:

The one External and Relative; and this is apply'd to Times, Places, Persons and Things, all which are in Scripture sometimes termed Holy.

The

The other is Internal and Inherent; and this relates only to Persons inwardly renew'd in their Minds, as we shall see after.

1. I say, There is an External and Relative Holiness, which consists in the relation that things bear to God, and their dedication to him; for whatsoever any way appertains or refers to God, who is the Fountain of all Holiness, may and is for that reason term'd *Holy*. Thus Times may be said to be *Holy*, by being consecrated to his Service: So we are bid to sanctify the Sabbath, and *remember to keep it Holy*. Thus Places are call'd *Holy*, by being set apart to holy Uses; for which reason the Temple, the Church or House of God, is in Scripture often call'd *the Sanctuary or the holy Place*. Persons likewise are call'd *Holy* for their Relation to God and Attendance upon his Service. So the Priests or Ministers of God are stil'd *Holy* for waiting at his Altar; yea, the Vessels and Utensils of the Temple are so stil'd for being us'd in his Service, and consecrated for that end.

But this Sanctification adding no inward or real Holiness to the things themselves, which are stil'd *Holy* merely by External Denomination, by being separated from common Uses, and devoted to Divine and Religious Purposes, falls not under our present Consideration. There is therefore,

2. An Internal and Inherent Holiness, and that consists in the renewing our Natures, by enlightning our Minds, and rectifying our Wills and Affections, and purging the whole Man from all inordinate and corrupt Inclinations. To sanctify in this sense, is to purify our Hearts by Faith, to work Grace in us, and to renew us throughout in Body, Soul and Spirit; and this is the Sanctification here meant, both in our Text and Catechism: 'tis what St. Paul prayed for in the behalf of the *Thessalonians*, That the God of Peace would sanctify them wholly, and preserve them blameless to the coming of the Lord Jesus, 1 Thess. 5. 23. This is the Holiness so often commanded and pressed upon us in Holy Scripture, where we are bid to follow Peace and Holiness, without which no Man shall see the Lord, Heb. 12. 14. and to be holy, as he that hath called us is holy, in all manner of Conversation and Godliness, 1 Pet. 1. 15. The working of which Grace and Holiness within us, is that which is here expressed by Sanctification. And this is here attributed to the Third Person in the Blessed Trinity, and made the proper Work and Office of the Holy Ghost; for our Text and Catechism tells us, that we are sanctified by the Holy Ghost. And indeed the Scripture every where ascribes the re-
newing

newing of our Natures, and working Grace in our Hearts, to the Influence and Operation of the *Holy Ghost*, call'd therefore the *Holy Spirit*; not only for his own Essential Holiness, which he hath in common with the other Persons of the Trinity; but because his Office is to infuse Holiness into us, and sanctify those that come unto God by Christ. 'Tis true, God the Father is sometimes said to *sanctify us*, 1 Thess. 5. 23. And God the Son is said to *be made unto us Sanctification, as well as Redemption*, 1 Cor. 1. 30. But both these work and act by the Holy Spirit, who alone gives Grace and Holiness to us, and *sanctifies our whole Spirit, Soul and Body*, with all the Powers and Faculties of each, enlightning our Minds with the knowledg of God, and renewing our Wills and Affections, by turning them from all Evil, and inclining them to that which is Good; all which are owing to the gracious and efficacious Motions of the Holy Spirit. Hence we are said to be *sealed by the Spirit to the Day of Redemption*, Eph. 4. 30. And *by this Seal of Divine Grace, the Lord knoweth who are his*, 2 Tim. 2. 19. But,

Secondly, How is the Holy Ghost said to sanctify us? Why, this he is in Scripture said to do by the Word and Sacraments. As,

1. By the Waters of Baptism he washes away the Pollution and Defilement of our corrupt Nature, and presents us pure as the Children of God. This our Saviour stiles *a being born again of Water and the Holy Ghost*; and tells us, That *without it we cannot enter into the Kingdom of Heaven*, John 3. 5. St. Peter tells us, that as Noah and his Family were *saved by Water*, that is, by its bearing up the Ark that preserv'd them; so *Baptism now also saveth us*, by bringing us into the Ark of Christ's Church, as the means of our Salvation: And this it doth *not by putting away the filth of the Flesh*, but by the inward washing and cleansing of the Soul represented by it, stild by St. Peter, *The answer of a good Conscience towards God, by the Resurrection of Jesus Christ*, 1 Pet. 3. 21. To the same purpose speaks St. Paul, *By his Mercy he saveth us by the washing of Regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost*, Tit. 3. 5. where Baptism is made the Laver of Regeneration, by the renewing of the Holy Spirit that accompanies it. The same Apostle speaking to the *Corinthians* of the Miseries of the Heathen State, and the happy Change that was made in them, tells them, *Such were some of you, but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified,*
but

but ye are justified in the name of Christ, by the Spirit of God, 1 Cor. 6. 11. where the washing away the guilt and filth of their Sins, together with the Sanctification and Justification that follow'd it, are all ascrib'd to the blessed Influence of the Holy Spirit. So that as the Angels stirring the Waters of *Bethesda*, made them fanative to the curing of all diseases of the Body; so the Holy Spirit's moving upon the Waters of Baptism, makes them salutary to the healing of all Distempers of the Soul.

2. The Holy Ghost by that other Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ, confirms, quickens and improves the Graces confer'd in Baptism; his sanctifying Influence first inspires us with a spiritual Life, and then proceeds to cherish and preserve it: the one is done by Baptism, the other by the Lord's Supper. Hence we read of *living by the Spirit*, and *walking by the Spirit*, Gal. 5. 25. The former relates to our entrance upon a new Life; the latter to our continuing and improving in it, in both which we are directed and assisted by the Spirit of God. Hence *the Sons of God* are said to *be led by the Spirit of God*, Rom. 8. 14. that is, being *baptiz'd into one Spirit*, they are led by it to the same Holy Table to obtain Grace and Strength to walk in it.

3. The Holy Ghost is said to sanctify us by the Word, call'd therefore the word of Sanctification; so our Saviour pray'd in the behalf of his Followers, *Sanctify them through thy Truth, thy Word is Truth*, John 17. 17, 19. *For their sakes I sanctify my self, that they also might be sanctified through the Truth*. The Word of Truth by which we are sanctified was dictated by the Holy Spirit, and the same Spirit hath qualified and set apart an Order of Men to expound and apply it to us; and thereby made it the means both of our Sanctification and Salvation: For which reason St. Paul gave Thanks unto God in the behalf of the *Thessalonians*, that *he had chosen them unto Salvation, through Sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the Truth*, 2 Thess. 2. 13.

Lastly, The Holy Ghost sanctifies by the secret Motions and Suggestions which he stirs up within us; whereby he inwardly and effectually calls and excites to Holiness, checking and reprehending us when we do amiss, and likewise comforting and commending us when we do that which is good. These are the secret Motions and Whispers of the Holy Spirit, which if hearken'd to, tend much to the *turning Men from Darkness to Light, and from the Power of Satan unto God*. 'Tis that Voice behind our backs, which says, *This is the way, walk in it, when we are turning to the right*

right Hand or to the left. Some indeed turn the deaf Ear to all its calls, and *like the deaf Adder, refuse to hear the voice of this Charmer, tho he charm never so wisely.* These are they that quench and resist the Holy Spirit of God, who therefore leaves them to the fury of those evil Spirits, to whose Conduct they have yielded themselves: but they who listen to the pious Admonitions of this divine Monitor, are said to be led by the Spirit, who will guide them into the ways of Truth and Holiness here, and after bring them to Glory.

Thus we see the nature of Sanctification, together with the Author and Manner of it: From whence I proceed,

Thirdly, To the Persons who are said to be thus sanctified; and they are in the Language of the Catechism, *me and all the elect People of God:* where every one is taught to apply this sanctifying Grace to himself in particular, and to use his best endeavours to find and feel it in his own Soul; saying, *he sanctified me.*

But who are the *elect People of God*, that are said to be sanctified by the Holy Ghost? In answer whereunto, by the Elect here, we understand not such as by an absolute and eternal Decree were elected unto Glory, as some are pleas'd to speak; for the Scripture gives us no ground to build upon any such thing: we are not bid to climb up to Heaven, to search the Register of God's Decrees, to see whether our Names are written in the Book of Life, or we inroll'd in the number of Persons predestinated to Salvation; these *secret Things* are too high for us, and *belong to God only:* they are *reveal'd things alone that belong to us*, and come within the ken and reach of our Knowledge. Accordingly therefore, by the *Elect People of God*, we are to understand such as are elected unto Grace, that is, such as are call'd and chosen out of the World, to be the Members of Christ's Church, and thereby to have the great Blessing and Privilege of living under the means of Grace, and having the Gospel-mysteries reveal'd and publish'd to them, together with the Influence and Assistance of God's Holy Spirit, to render them effectual and beneficial to them. This is the Scripture-notion of Election: and they that are thus singl'd out of the un sanctify'd Herd of wicked Men, and taken into the number of Christ's Flock, are the elect People of God, stil'd therefore *a chosen Generation, a Holy Nation, a peculiar People, zealous of good Works.* Put on therefore as the Elect of God, Holy and Beloved,

Beloved (saith the Apostle) *Bowels of Mercy, Kindness, Meekness, long-Suffering*, Col. 3. 12. That is, you that are chosen out for the Servants and Followers of Christ, labor to imitate the goodness and compassion of your Master, and walk in Love as he also hath loved you. They that do so are the choice select People of God, mark'd out for Vessels of Grace here, and thereby fitted and prepared for Glory hereafter.

In short, all the true Followers of Christ, that have given up their Names to him, and are taken into the number of his Disciples, are in the Scripture-Language still'd the elect People of God.

And these are they that are *sanctified by the Holy Ghost*; that is, they have Grace wrought in their Hearts by the Holy Spirit of God, whereby their Ears are open'd to hear Instructions, their Hearts soften'd to receive the Impression of divine Truths, and their Minds purified from the Pollutions of the World.

Thus we see what it is to be sanctified, who they are that are said to be sanctified, and likewise how, and by whom this pious Work is effected and wrought in us. It remains only, that we make some good Use and Application hereof to our selves.

And 1. If it be the proper work of the Holy Ghost to sanctify us and all the elect People of God; then let us beware of grieving the Holy Spirit of God, and doing despight to this Spirit of Grace: and this is done chiefly by resisting or stifling those good Motions which the Spirit of God stirs up within us, and turning the deaf Ear to its calls and admonitions. The Spirit is said to strive with us, both outwardly by the Ministry of the Word, and inwardly by the calls and whispers of Conscience, which are the voice of God speaking within us. If we observe it, we shall find and feel something within us, moving and loudly prompting us to that which is Good, and secretly whispering and dissuading us from that which is Evil; and there are none but some time or other experience the Truth of both. Now these are the strivings of the Holy Spirit within us, who fills us with Joy and Peace in well doing, and stings us with Fears and Terrors upon doing Evil: and both these to destroy the Power and Dominion of Sin, and to make way for the entrance and empire of divine Grace in the Soul. The end of all is our Sanctification, to make us Holy here, that we may be eternally happy hereafter. If then we cherish and close with these holy Motions, we delight the Holy Spirit, and engage him to dwell and abide with us: but if we quench and suppress these pious Inspirations, and suffer them to

go off without leaving any Impression upon us, we then grieve the Holy Spirit of God, and provoke him to withdraw his Graces and blessed Influences from us. He will no longer strive with us, but will leave us to the hardness of our own Hearts, and to the malignity of those evil Spirits that only seek our Destruction. Wherefore if we would feel this sanctifying Influence of the Holy Ghost, let us beware of displeasing him by resisting the publick Calls or private Admonitions of this divine Monitor; but rather let us listen to and join issue with all the good Motions and holy Inspirations he is pleas'd to vouchsafe to us, to whom we owe all the Graces and good Dispositions we have or hope for. To this end, let us

2. Thankfully own and hearken to these divine Inspirations, not looking upon them as the common and ordinary Suggestions of Fancy, to be receiv'd or rejected at pleasure; but attending to them as Calls and Messages from Heaven, and obeying them as the means of our Sanctification. Let us bless God, that he doth not abandon us to our selves, or leave us to the ways of our own Hearts; but that he is still solliciting and striving with us, importuning us for our good, and beseeching us to accept the Terms and Methods of our own Salvation. And because of the many Difficulties and Temptations that lie in our way, let us

Lastly, pray unto God for the Aids and Assistances of his Holy Spirit; to *establish our Hearts with Grace*, and strengthen them against all Temptations; that he would *create a clean Heart, and renew a right Spirit within us*: that our Ears may be open to hear Instructions, and our Hearts mollified to receive the Impressions of Piety and Vertue. Particularly, let us pray for the three divine and excellent Graces, Faith, Hope and Charity; that so being thereby sanctified with all the elect People of God, we may be e'er long glorified together.

OF THE AMERICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION
535 N. Dearborn St., Chicago, Ill.
Subscription price, \$5.00 per annum in advance.
Single copies, 15 cents.

Entered as second-class matter, May 2, 1912.
Postpaid at special rate of \$3.75 per annum.
Acceptance for mailing at special rate of postage provided for in Act of October 3, 1917.
Postage paid at Chicago, Ill.

Copyright, 1919, by American Medical Association
Printed at the American Medical Association Press, Chicago, Ill.

Published by the American Medical Association
535 N. Dearborn St., Chicago, Ill.
Subscription price, \$5.00 per annum in advance.
Single copies, 15 cents.

Entered as second-class matter, May 2, 1912.
Postpaid at special rate of \$3.75 per annum.
Acceptance for mailing at special rate of postage provided for in Act of October 3, 1917.
Postage paid at Chicago, Ill.

Copyright, 1919, by American Medical Association
Printed at the American Medical Association Press, Chicago, Ill.

Published by the American Medical Association
535 N. Dearborn St., Chicago, Ill.
Subscription price, \$5.00 per annum in advance.
Single copies, 15 cents.

Entered as second-class matter, May 2, 1912.
Postpaid at special rate of \$3.75 per annum.
Acceptance for mailing at special rate of postage provided for in Act of October 3, 1917.
Postage paid at Chicago, Ill.

Copyright, 1919, by American Medical Association
Printed at the American Medical Association Press, Chicago, Ill.

Published by the American Medical Association
535 N. Dearborn St., Chicago, Ill.
Subscription price, \$5.00 per annum in advance.
Single copies, 15 cents.

Entered as second-class matter, May 2, 1912.
Postpaid at special rate of \$3.75 per annum.
Acceptance for mailing at special rate of postage provided for in Act of October 3, 1917.
Postage paid at Chicago, Ill.

Copyright, 1919, by American Medical Association
Printed at the American Medical Association Press, Chicago, Ill.

Published by the American Medical Association
535 N. Dearborn St., Chicago, Ill.
Subscription price, \$5.00 per annum in advance.
Single copies, 15 cents.

Entered as second-class matter, May 2, 1912.
Postpaid at special rate of \$3.75 per annum.
Acceptance for mailing at special rate of postage provided for in Act of October 3, 1917.
Postage paid at Chicago, Ill.

Copyright, 1919, by American Medical Association
Printed at the American Medical Association Press, Chicago, Ill.

Published by the American Medical Association
535 N. Dearborn St., Chicago, Ill.
Subscription price, \$5.00 per annum in advance.
Single copies, 15 cents.

Entered as second-class matter, May 2, 1912.
Postpaid at special rate of \$3.75 per annum.
Acceptance for mailing at special rate of postage provided for in Act of October 3, 1917.
Postage paid at Chicago, Ill.

Copyright, 1919, by American Medical Association
Printed at the American Medical Association Press, Chicago, Ill.

Published by the American Medical Association
535 N. Dearborn St., Chicago, Ill.
Subscription price, \$5.00 per annum in advance.
Single copies, 15 cents.

Entered as second-class matter, May 2, 1912.
Postpaid at special rate of \$3.75 per annum.
Acceptance for mailing at special rate of postage provided for in Act of October 3, 1917.
Postage paid at Chicago, Ill.

Copyright, 1919, by American Medical Association
Printed at the American Medical Association Press, Chicago, Ill.

Published by the American Medical Association
535 N. Dearborn St., Chicago, Ill.
Subscription price, \$5.00 per annum in advance.
Single copies, 15 cents.

Entered as second-class matter, May 2, 1912.
Postpaid at special rate of \$3.75 per annum.
Acceptance for mailing at special rate of postage provided for in Act of October 3, 1917.
Postage paid at Chicago, Ill.

Copyright, 1919, by American Medical Association
Printed at the American Medical Association Press, Chicago, Ill.

Published by the American Medical Association
535 N. Dearborn St., Chicago, Ill.
Subscription price, \$5.00 per annum in advance.
Single copies, 15 cents.

Entered as second-class matter, May 2, 1912.
Postpaid at special rate of \$3.75 per annum.
Acceptance for mailing at special rate of postage provided for in Act of October 3, 1917.
Postage paid at Chicago, Ill.

Copyright, 1919, by American Medical Association
Printed at the American Medical Association Press, Chicago, Ill.

Published by the American Medical Association
535 N. Dearborn St., Chicago, Ill.
Subscription price, \$5.00 per annum in advance.
Single copies, 15 cents.

A
PRACTICAL EXPOSITION
OF THE
SECOND PART
OF THE
Church-Catechism:
CONTAINING
The *DECALOGUE*
OR
TEN COMMANDMENTS.

Matth. 19. 17. *If thou wilt enter into Life, keep the
Commandments.*



Printed in the Year 1707.

The P R E F A C E.

GOD Almighty that made the World, hath the sole Right to command and govern it : to which end, it was expedient for him to give Laws to his Creatures, to direct them in their Duty, and to set them their bounds, which they should not pass.

And because there is no doing our Master's Will without knowing it, 'twas likewise necessary that he should publish his Mind to the World, and give Mankind the Knowledge of his Laws.

Accordingly our great Creator hath given us a Law, engraven at first upon the Tables of the Heart, and after upon two Tables of Stone, as a lasting Monument of his Care, and a standing Rule of our Lives and Actions; this Law is sum'd up for us in the Decalogue or Ten Commandments, which contain the whole of our Duty both to God and Man, and coming from him, who is Wisdom and Truth it self, must needs be (as the Apostle stiles it) Holy, Just and Good.

'Twas first given by Moses to the Jews only, who were a peculiar People, to whom alone pertain'd the Adoption, the giving of the Law, and the Promises: But was since enlarg'd and given to all Christians by our Blessed Saviour, who refin'd it from all corrupt Interpretations, and explain'd it to a stricter and more spiritual sense than was ever known before.

But tho the knowledg of this Law be highly useful and necessary, yet that alone is not sufficient to Salvation without the Practice and Observation of it: 'tis the keeping of the Commandments that leads to eternal Life; and if ye know these things, ye are only Happy if ye do them.

By this Law we have the knowledg of Sin, not barely to entertain our Speculation, but to regulate our Practice, and to help us to steer our Course aright.

In

In short, This Law being given to be a-Light unto our Feet, and a Lanthorn to our Paths; it will not be amiss to hang it out unto the People, to make their way plain before them, and to guide their Feet into the ways of Truth and Peace, which is the sole design of the following Exposition.

I am sufficiently sensible how far it must fall short of the dignity of the Subject; for who can reach the Perfection of the Divine Law, or fully comprehend the Mind of so great a Lawgiver?

However such as it is, 'tis humbly tender'd to the Judgment and Practice of the honest Reader, who 'tis to be hop'd will accept the good Intention of the Author, and cover the Failings and Imperfections of the Undertaking.

It remains only that we in good earnest set our selves to the Practice of our Duty, as 'tis here discover'd to us; and implore the Blessing of Heaven to assist us in it, which will never be wanting to our hearty and sincere Endeavours.

Farewel.

The

The Commandments.

GOD spake these words, and said, I am the Lord thy God, that brought thee out of the Land of Egypt, and out of the House of Bondage.

Thou shalt have no other Gods but me.

Thou shalt not make to thy self any graven Image, nor the likeness of any thing that is in Heaven above, or in the Earth beneath, or in the Water under the Earth: thou shalt not bow down to them, or worship them; for I the Lord thy God am a Jealous God, visiting the iniquities of the Fathers upon the Children, to the third and fourth Generation of them that hate me, and shew Mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my Commandments.

Thou shalt not take the Name of the Lord thy God in vain, for the Lord will not hold them guiltless that take his Name in vain.

Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy: six days shalt thou labour, and do all that thou hast to do, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God; for in six days the Lord made Heaven and Earth, the Sea and all that is therein, and rested the seventh day; wherefore the Lord blessed the seventh day, and hallowed it.

Honour thy Father and thy Mother, that thy days may be long in the Land, which the Lord thy God giveth thee.

Thou shalt do no Murder.

Thou shalt not commit Adultery.

Thou shalt not Steal.

Thou shalt not bear false Witness against thy Neighbour.

Thou shalt not covet thy Neighbours House, thou shalt not covet thy Neighbours Wife, nor his Man-servant, nor his Ma d-servant, nor his Ox, nor his Ass, nor any thing that is his.

A Practical Exposition of the Second Part of the Church-Catechism.

DISCOURSE I.

Matth. 5. 17. Think not that I am come to destroy the Law and the Prophets ; I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.

HAVING in a former Treatise shew'd what we are to believe in order to Salvation, by the Explication of the Apostle's Creed : I proceed to shew what we are to do as necessary to that end, by a particular Explication of the Decalogue or Ten Commandments. To this the

Next Question and Answer in the Catechism lead us, in these words ; *You said, that your Godfathers and Godmothers did promise for you, that you should keep God's Commandments ; tell me how many there be.* To which

The Answer is *Ten, The same which God spake in the 20th Chapter of Exodus, saying, &c.*

But before I enter upon the *Commandments*, 'twill be requisite to premise something touching the Obligation, the Excellence, and the Extent of the Divine Law. Of the

First of these I shall treat at this time from these words of our Saviour, *Think not that I am come to destroy the Law, &c.*

The occasion of which Words, was from a certain Jealousy of the Jews and others, that Christ design'd to destroy the Old Law, which they held in great Veneration. This they gather'd from his frequent opposing what he said, to what *had been said to them of old* : because he gave other and higher Precepts than those they had receiv'd, and put a stricter sense upon the Law and Prophets than was commonly known and receiv'd among them, they concluded he was about to dissolve the whole Frame of *Moses's*

Law, and to set up a new Doctrine in opposition to it.

Now to remove this Suspicion, he wills them, in the words of our Text, *Not to think that he came to destroy the Law and the Prophets*; assuring them the contrary: for he *came not to destroy, but to fulfil it*. In treating of which words I must shew,

First, What we are to understand by the *Law and the Prophets*.

Secondly, What is here meant by *destroying*, and *fulfilling* of it.

Thirdly, In what sense our Saviour denies the one, and affirms the other, that he *came not to destroy the Law, but to fulfil it*.

For the *First*; By the Law and the Prophets, we are to understand the Writings of *Moses* and the Prophets, or the whole Revelation of the Divine Will deliver'd by them, and contain'd in the Books of the Old Testament: which Law consisted of three great Parts or Branches, *viz.* the Moral, the Judicial, and the Ceremonial Precepts.

The Moral Law contains the Decalogue, or Ten Commandments, which are the dictates of Natural Light, or the Rules of a Holy Life; these were first engraven on the Tables of the Heart by the Finger of God himself. And when they began to be blotted and defac'd by the defection of Mankind, there was a Second Edition of them on Mount *Sinai*, engraven on two Tables of Stone, and deliver'd to the People of the Jews by the Hand of *Moses*. After which being corrupted by the false Glosses of the Scribes and Pharisees, our Saviour gave a Third Edition of them on the Mount of *Olives*, in which he rescu'd them from their corrupt Interpretations, and refin'd them into a more pure Rule of Life and Manners. The Publication hereof on Mount *Sinai*, was attended with Thunder and Lightning, and with all the stern and pompous Solemnities of Dread and Terror, to awe the World into the observance of them, as you may read at large in the 19th Chapter of *Exodus*. This last Edition of them on the Mount of *Olives*, was deliver'd in the more pleasing sound of Peace and Blessedness, to draw Disciples by the Cords of Love, and by the most obliging Attractives, to encourage and reward their Obedience, as you may see in *Mat.* 5.

The Judicial Law consisted of those Laws and Statutes that were given to the Jews as they were a Commonwealth, and were prescrib'd to them by God Almighty for their Civil Government.

The Ceremonial Law consisted of Sacrifices, Offerings, and divers

vers kinds of Washing; all which were typical Representations of the Life and Death of the Messias, or memorative Signs and Shadows of good things to be receiv'd by him.

In short then, the whole Oeconomy of the Jewish Religion contain'd in the Old Testament, and particularly the Rules of a Holy Life deliver'd to the World before the coming of our Saviour, is what we understand here by the Law and Prophets. But,

Secondly, What is it to destroy the Law and the Prophets, and what to fulfil it? To destroy a Law, is to take off the Obligation of it, and to loose those from any farther Duty, and observance of it, that were before bound by it: And this is done, either,

1. By enacting something in opposition to it, whereby it is formally repeal'd, and so declar'd null, and void of any farther Obligation. Or else,

2. By removing all Occasions of any further use of it, whereby the Obligation ceases of course, as the Laws of War cease and have no place in times of Peace.

To fulfil a Law, is not only to observe and perform what is requir'd by it, but to advance and improve it, to fill up the Vacuities of it, and to answer and accomplish all that is intended by it.

These things being premis'd, I proceed to inquire,

Thirdly, In what sense our Saviour declares here, that he came not to destroy the Law and the Prophets, but to fulfil it.

In answer whereunto we must note, that tho Christ did not properly destroy the Ceremonial or Judicial Laws of *Moses*, by opposing, violating or contradicting either; yet these words of our Saviour are principally meant of the Moral Law, or those Precepts of Natural Light sum'd up and deliver'd in the Ten Commandments, which he was so far from diminishing or disannulling, that he rather confirm'd and heighten'd the Obligation, as plainly appears by his expounding of it in this Chapter.

As for the Ceremonial Law, that may be said rather to die of it self, than to be destroy'd; for as Darknes vanishes at the approach of Light, so the dark Types of the Law, which were only Figures and Shadows of good things, yielded to the Substance, and disappear'd of course by the brightness of his coming.

As for the Judicial Law of the Jewish State, that was not destroy'd by our Saviour, but fell of it self by the destruction of the

Commonwealth: for those Laws being peculiar only to the Jewish Nation, were to continue no longer than the Commonwealth continued; insomuch that when the City of *Jerusalem* was destroy'd, and the Jewish Polity dissolv'd by becoming a *Roman* Province, there was an end of the Commonwealth, and consequently of the Laws by which it was govern'd; which without any Violence or Violation offer'd to them by our Saviour, fell of their own accord, with the Dissolution of the Government. So that he cannot be said truly to destroy either of those Laws by any express Repeal or Opposition to them, tho they both ceas'd and fell to the ground.

But this Saying of our Saviour, that *he came not to destroy the Law*, was chiefly intended of the Moral Law, or Ten Commandments; for he never abrogated or dispens'd with any one Precept of that Law, but left his Followers under the perpetual Obligation and Observance of them; he renew'd and ratify'd the Precepts of both Tables, requiring us *to love God with all our Heart, and with all our Mind, and our Neighbour as our selves*: adding, that *on these two Commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets*. Again, in this Sermon of his on the Mount, he adopts into his Religion that dictate of Natural Light; *All things whatsoever ye would that Men should do to you, do ye even so unto them, for this is the Law and the Prophets*. By all which, as likewise by the whole course of his Life and Doctrine, it manifestly appears, that he came not to destroy the Law and the Prophets, by annulling, opposing, or any ways lessening our Obligation to them.

Yea, he was so far from destroying the Law or the Prophets, that he affirms the Design of his coming was to fulfil both, which will lead us to inquire into the true sense and meaning of those words. And here we may observe again, that tho Christ punctually observ'd the whole Law, which is in Scripture express'd by his *fulfilling all Righteousness*; yet the Expression here chiefly relates to the Moral part of it, which he not only observ'd and establish'd, but likewise improv'd and perfected: the word in the Original is *πληρῶσαι*, which signifies not only to perform, but to perfect and fill up; and so our Saviour's fulfilling the Law was his advancing, accomplishing and perfecting of it, which he did in some sense in all its Branches.

He fulfil'd the Ceremonial Law, not only by his own Obedience to it, but by accomplishing of it, and introducing the Substance of what was only prefigur'd and shadow'd by it. The Sacrifices
injoin'd

injoin'd in that Law were but Types of the great Propitiatory Sacrifice of Christ himself; and all the legal Washings and Purifications represented only that spiritual Purity that he requir'd under the Gospel. These were *shadows of good things to come, but the Body is Christ*, says the Apostle, Col. 2. 17. He was the Substance of those Shadows, and introduc'd the things themselves that were represented by them: which is the sense of those words of St. John, *The Law was given by Moses, but Grace and Truth came by Jesus Christ*, John 1. 17. meaning, that Christ brought in the Life and Substance of what was only pictur'd and prefigur'd in the Law of Moses. Again,

He fulfil'd the Judicial Law, not only by submitting himself to it, but by adding that Royal Law of Love and universal Kindness, which tends more to preserve the Peace and Prosperity of a Commonwealth, than any Book of Statutes, or the whole Body of Human Laws.

But above all, he fulfil'd the Moral Law, not only by his own Personal Obedience, but by adding to it some stricter Rules of Holiness, and filling up those Vacuities that Moses had left in Moral Duties. He establish'd the Covenant upon better Promises, and gave sublimer Precepts than those given of old; he repair'd and made up what was wanting in Moses's Law, and restor'd what was taken from it by false Glosses and Interpretations. He enlarg'd the Sense of it farther than the Jews ever receiv'd it, and extended the Obligation of it, not only to the outward but to the inward Man, forbidding the Murder of the Heart, as well as of the Hand; the Adultery and Impurity of the Mind, as well as of the Body; Coveting, as well as Purloining: Instead of *returning Evil for Evil*, allow'd by the Law of Retaliation, he requir'd to *overcome Evil with Good*: and whereas it had been said by them of old, *Thou shalt love thy Friends, and hate thine Enemy*; he hath commanded us to *love our Enemies, to do good to them that hate us, and pray for them that despitefully use and persecute us*.

In short, he fulfil'd the whole Law, by accomplishing what was contain'd in it, and answering all that was intended by it. The Design of the Ceremonial Law, was not any delight which God took in the Blood of Bulls and of Goats, but in a broken and contrite Heart; which he fulfil'd by requiring Obedience, which is *better than Sacrifice, and to hearken, than the Fat of Rams*, as we read Jer. 6. 20. Isa. 1. 11, 12. Mich. 6. 6, 7.

The

The end of the Judicial Law was to do Judgment and Justice and to preserve the Peace and Welfare of the Commonwealth, which he effectually provided for by many strict Precepts of Justice and Charity: So that Christ, both in his Person and Doctrine, was the *End of the Law for Righteousness*, which was the thing mainly intended in the whole *Mosaical* Dispensation. By all which we see how truly our Saviour affirm'd, that he *came not to destroy the Law, but to fulfil it*; for his addition of higher and better Precepts, was no Destruction but Improvement: as a Child is not destroy'd, but improv'd and perfected, by arriving to the Stature of a Man.

But are we still then under the Law? Do we not read often of a *Liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free*; and that *we are not under the Law, but under Grace*? and how can this be, if the Obligation of it remains? In answer hereunto,

1. The Liberty mention'd by the Apostle, is a freedom from the Yoke of Legal Rites and Ceremonies, which before the coming of the Messiah, lay hard on the Neck of the Jews; but now, neither they nor we are under the Obligation of them: and to continue them now, would be to *intangle our selves in a yoke of Bondage*. For that Law of Ceremonies was only a Schoolmaster to lead unto Christ, who being come, hath caus'd that Law to cease, not by any opposition to it, but by fulfilling of it, and removing any farther use and occasion for it. For since they all referred to, and were accomplish'd in him, there can be no reason for the longer continuance of them, he being the substance and completion of them. Again,

2. For the Moral Law, we are freed from that too as to the rigor and curse of it: the Law in its rigor exacts perfect Obedience, and pronounces Sentence upon every Breach and Violation of it; as it is written, *Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things that are written in the Book of the Law to do them*. By this we are all guilty and condemn'd Persons, lying under the heavy Sentence of Eternal Death; but Christ *hath redeemed us* (says the Apostle) *from the Curse of the Law, being made a Curse for us*, Gal. 4.

By his New Covenant of Grace he hath abated of this Rigor, he accepts our hearty Indeavours, and takes Sincerity for compleat Obedience: so that now we are not to stand or fall by the rigorous Terms and Demands of the Law, but may appeal from that to the Grace and Mercy of the Gospel, there being now *no*

Condem-

Condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus; in which sense it is, that we are said to be, not under the Law, but under Grace. But yet,

3. We are not freed from the Law as a Rule of Life and Manners, in which sense it remains in its full Vigor and Authority; for as *God hath not left himself without a Witness* of his Being, so neither hath he left us without a Rule of our Actions. Our Saviour hath not loosen'd our Obligation to the Divine Law, but rather encreas'd and heighten'd it; nor hath he dispens'd with any Moral Duty to God or Man, but instead thereof hath perfected and added to them; he hath more fully explain'd, enlarg'd and inculcated our Duty than 'twas before: and tho he hath deliver'd his Followers from the Curse, yet he hath not freed them from the Observance of Divine Precepts. These are still to regulate our Practice, to bind our Conscience, and to be both the Measure and Motive of our Obedience; these are to be standing Directions what we are to do, and what to avoid, and will for ever continue to be so: for tho *Heaven and Earth may pass away, yet not one jot or tittle of God's Law shall pass away or fall to the ground.*

Thus we see the indispensable Obligation that lies upon us to observe the Decalogue or Ten Commandments; and likewise how far our Blessed Saviour was from destroying or disannulling it. From whence we may learn,

First, The dangerous Error of the Libertines and Antinomians, who fondly imagine that Christ's fulfilling the whole Law in our stead, hath freed his Followers from any farther Duty and Observance of it; that nothing now is requir'd of us but only to believe, to accept of and apply to our selves what he hath done for us; that we are to be sav'd by the imputed Righteousness of Christ, without regard to any Holiness of our own; that all preaching up of good Works is moral preaching, and they that live in the practice of them are only moral Men; that we are to have no eye to the strictness and severity of the Law, but to cast our selves wholly upon the Mercy and Favour of the Gospel.

These and the like Doctrines, too publickly vented and too greedily receiv'd among us, let Men loose from all the Obligations of Religion and Vertue, and open a Gap for all Licentiousness. We see the End of the Law was Righteousness, to induce Men *to do justly, to love Mercy, and walk humbly with God*: And what was more obscurely and typically reveal'd of this kind in the Old Testament, is more clearly explain'd and brought to light by the

the Gospel; and therefore all such Doctrines being contrary to the Laws of God, are to be rejected as the corrupt Designs and Inventions of Men. Wherefore in the

Last place: Since Christ came not to destroy, but to fulfil and perfect what was deliver'd in the Law and Prophets; let us not look upon it as annul'd or antiquated, but that he hath tied the Obligation so much stronger and faster upon us: He hath only taken off the Load of the Mosaical Rites and Ceremonies, and thereby made his Yoke the more easy, and his Burden lighter, which we are not therefore to cast off, but to take up and bear it with the greater chearfulness; he hath remov'd the Cloud and Obscurity that was upon many Precepts of the Law, and made our Way more plain before us. In a word therefore, let it be a Light to our Feet, and a Lanthorn to our Paths; the Guide of our Lives, and the Rule of our Actions: and as many as walk by this Rule, Peace be upon them and the *Israel* of God.

DISCOURSE II.

Psal. 119. 96. I have seen an end of all Perfection; but thy Commandment is exceeding broad.

I Premis'd something in my last touching the Obligation of the Decalogue or Ten Commandments, which I am to explain to you. I must now add something touching the Excellency and Extent of the Divine Law, the better to excite you to the study and practice of it.

For the Excellence of it; We find the Royal Psalmist, who by his frequent Study and Meditation upon it, was well vers'd in it, at last setting forth the Perfection of this Divine Law, in *Psal. 119. 7, 8, 9. The Law of the Lord is perfect, converting the Soul; the Testimony of the Lord is sure, giving wisdom to the Simple: The Statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; the Commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightning the eyes; the Fear of the Lord is clean, enduring for ever; the Judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.* Where he amply declares the Excellency of God's Law, from the Holiness, the Justice, the Usefulness, the Certainty, the Purity, and Perfection of it.

For

For the Extent and Comprehensiveness of it, he tells us here in the words of our Text, that *tho he had seen an end of all Perfection, yet the Commandments of God were exceeding broad, and he could see no end thereof.*

By the Law of God here we understand not, 1. The Ceremonial part of it; which tho not properly destroy'd by Christ, yet by his fulfilling of it ceas'd of course, and we have liv'd to see an end of that. Nor yet,

2. Are we to understand here the Judicial Law, which being the Statutes and Ordinances of the Jewish Commonwealth, were peculiar only to that Nation, and ceas'd likewise with the Dissolution of that Government; so that with respect to them and many other sublunary Excellences, we may say with *David*, we have seen an end of all Perfection. But the Law, whose Excellency and Extent are here celebrated, is the Moral Law or ten Commandments; which, the Psalmist here tells us, *are exceeding broad.* This Law is indeed exceeding strait, as to the Holiness and Strictness of its Precepts, giving not the least scope or indulgence to any unruly Lust; but 'tis exceeding broad with respect to the Comprehensiveness of its Injunctions, which reach not only to the outward, but the inner Man. Tho God Almighty hath compris'd his whole Will in ten short Laws, call'd therefore the Decalogue or ten Commandments; and tho our blessed Saviour hath reduc'd them all to one Precept, making *Love the fulfilling of the Law*, declaring that upon the two parts of it, the Love of God and of our Neighbour, as upon two Hinges, *hang all the Law and the Prophets*: Tho, I say, it seems to lie in this narrow compass, yet each of these Parts dilate and spread themselves into so many branches, as make them exceeding broad and extensive. For the Love of God comprizes all that Duty and Homage we owe to our Maker, and will not suffer the least Violation of his Honour: The Love of our Neighbour includes all the Offices of Justice and Kindness we owe to one another, and will not permit any Violence to be offer'd to the Person or Rights of any: and both these are justly stil'd the fulfilling of the Law. Yea, Charity, which includes both, is of a large extent, as may be seen in the several Acts and Branches of it mention'd by St. Paul in 1 Cor. 13. call'd therefore *the Bond of Perfection*. And tho the end of the Law is Charity, yet is that Grace so exceeding wide and comprehensive, that we can see no end of that Perfection.

Now the Breadth and Length of the Commandments will the better appear, by considering the Persons, the Time, and the Matters to which they extend ; in all which senses we shall find them *exceeding broad*. And,

1. For the Persons concern'd in them, they are all Mankind, for whose Welfare and Direction they were first given, and are still continued and deriv'd down to us ; and being the Dictates of natural Reason, as well as the Directions of the Divine Will, their Obligation must be as wide as Human Nature, and extend unto all Persons. 'Tis true indeed there were some Circumstances at the first solemn Delivery of this Law, that seem'd to relate only to the Jewish Nation ; and being expressly stil'd a Covenant made with that People, seems to confine it wholly unto them : but yet if we consider the Nature of the Commandments themselves, and our Saviour's Exposition of them, we shall find them of a larger extent, and to concern all Mankind. Then,

2. For the Time ; the Obligation of these Precepts commenc'd with the beginning of the World, and will last to the end of it : for being first engraven on the Heart, and afterwards on Tables of Stone by the Finger of God himself, nothing can totally deface or destroy the Impression. *Thy Word* (saith the Psalmist) *is from everlasting, and thy Truth endureth throughout all Ages*. Yea, the Love of God and our Neighbour, which is the Substance of this Law, will continue to Eternity, and last when Time itself shall be no more ; for 'twill go with us into the other World, and there make up the greatest part of our future Felicity : which indefeasible Duration shews us the Length and Breadth of God's Commandments.

3. The Matter or Things to which they extend will farther shew them to be *exceeding broad* ; for they comprehend all the Duties, and reach to all the Actions of human Life.

1. All those Precepts scatter'd up and down in the Holy Scripture may be reduc'd to, and are sum'd up in these Commandments : insomuch that there is no Duty we owe either to God or Man, but falls under one or more of these ten Precepts, which are therefore reckon'd a Summary or Abstract of the whole Duty of Man ; and that because,

2. They extend likewise to all the Actions of human Life, so that there is not an idle Word or an evil Work, but comes under the Check and Censure of this Law ; yea, it reaches the very Thoughts and Intentions of the Heart, and designs to regulate

late the inward as well as the outward Man. This is a thing peculiar to the Divine Laws, to take cognizance of our Thoughts, which no human Power can discern or reach : whereas to God the Maker and Searcher of Hearts, our Minds are as visible as our Faces ; and 'tis but reason that his Laws should reach as far as his Knowledg, and that he should punish those Irregularities, which none else can prescribe to or prevent. *We know* (saith the Apostle) *that the Law is spiritual* ; for it enters into our Spirits, summons our Thoughts, and arraigns the Motions and Affections of the Heart : for which reason the *Word of God is said to be quick and powerful, piercing into the Soul and Spirit, and is a Discerner of the Thoughts and Intents of the Heart*, Heb. 4. 12.

Thus we see the Commandments of God in their full latitude are *exceeding broad*, and include much more in the Sense, than is express'd in the Letter of them ; as will more fully appear hereafter in the expounding of them.

But for the better taking the Dimensions of the Divine Law, and to shew the Length and Breadth of God's Commandments, 'twill be requisite to premise some of those general Rules given for the expounding of them.

Because the several Precepts of this Law are express'd, some in a negative, and some in an affirmative Form, therefore the

First Rule usually given for expounding of them is this, *viz.* The Negative Precepts of the Law include the Affirmative, and the Affirmative always infer the Negative : that is, where any Sin is forbidden in God's Commandments, there the Duty contrary to it is requir'd ; and where any Duty is requir'd, there the contrary Sin is forbidden, for these things necessarily imply and infer each other. Thus for example, those negative Precepts that forbid Murder, Adultery, Theft, false Witness, Covetousness, require the opposite Vertues of Meekness, Chastity, Honesty, Truth, and Contentment with our Condition. And those affirmative Precepts that require the keeping holy the Lord's Day, and honouring God's holy Name and Word, forbid all Abuse and Prophanation of either. But tho the negative and affirmative Precepts thus include and infer one another, yet the Obligation of them are not both alike ; and therefore a

Second Rule is wont to be added, *viz.* That the negative Precepts bind *semper & ad semper*, that is, always and every moment of time ; but the affirmative Precepts bind *semper*, but not *ad semper* : that is, they bind always, but not every moment. As in the former Instances, those negative Precepts that

forbid Murder, Adultery, Theft, and false Witness, bind always and to every moment; because there can be no part or moment of Time, in which it may be lawful to murder, commit Adultery, steal, or bear false Witness. But the affirmative Precepts of keeping holy the Sabbath-day, and serving and worshipping of God, bind indeed always, but not to every moment; for there are many moments of Time between the return of those seasons, in which we may be otherwise lawfully employ'd, tho these things be for some time intermitted: and both the Necessities of Nature and the Duties of our Calling require some Cessation from them. Indeed as to the Habit of Obedience, that extends to every moment, for we are bid to pray without ceasing, that is, to be always in a readiness and disposition to serve him; but the actual Performance of it is not always necessary or practicable, for we cannot be every minute upon our knees, or always actually praying or praising God.

A Third Rule for the right expounding and understanding this Law, is, That those negative Commands that forbid the outward and grosser Acts of any Sin, forbid all the inward Desires and Motions of the Soul towards it; and likewise those affirmative Precepts that command the external Acts of any Virtue, command also those internal Acts and Affections of the Soul, that are futable and necessary to the performance of it. Thus for example, the Law that prohibits Adultery, forbids not only the outward grosser Acts of Uncleaness, but all Impurity of the Mind, all unchast Desires, or Delight in forbidden Pleasures, tho they never come into Act. So likewise the Commandment that enjoins the worshipping and serving God, exacts from us not barely the outward Service of the Lip or the Knee, but chiefly the inward Reverence and Devotion of the Heart.

4. Another Rule is, that those Precepts that prohibit the greater or higher Acts of Sin, forbid likewise all the lower Degrees, Occasions and Tendencies thereunto; and those Commandments that enjoin any Duty, require also all the Means and Helps that are necessary to the doing of it. Thus the Commandment that forbids Murder, prohibits all rash and causeless Anger, with all that Hatred and Malice that may occasion it: The Commandment that forbids Adultery, condemns all wanton Desires and Dresses, all lascivious Behaviour in Thought, Word or Deed, that may lead to it. In like manner all those Precepts that require us to love and worship God, to honour and
obey

obey our Parents, require likewise all the necessary Means, Helps, and Occasions leading thereunto. All these things are warranted by our Saviour's expounding the Law in his Divine Sermon on the Mount.

Lastly, Tho the Precepts of the first Table relate to the Duty we owe to God, and tho the Duties of the second Table which concern our Neighbour, are to be observ'd for the sake of the first; yet in some cases the Duties of the first Table give place to those of the second, and the Love we bear to our Neighbour will supersede the Obligation of some Duties we are to pay unto God. This Rule is grounded on the Words of God Almighty, who hath declar'd that *he will have Mercy and not Sacrifice*: not that he rejects those *Sacrifices* which he expressly requires, especially that of a *broken and contrite Heart*; but where our own or others Infirmities disable us from, or interfere with the Worship of God, there he hath graciously dispens'd with us during that Exigence, and allow'd the Service of himself to give way to the serving our selves and our distress'd Neighbour. This is evident in the case of the Sabbath or Lord's Day, in which the Works of Necessity and Charity are by our Saviour's Approbation and Example to take place of the highest Acts of Piety; for *the Sabbath* (saith he) *was made for Man, and not Man for the Sabbath*, Mark 2. 27. where the Son of God, who is Lord of the Sabbath, declares that Works of Necessity and Mercy, and that not only to Man, but to brute Beasts, may be lawfully done on that day, without any Guilt, or the Profanation of it.

Thus we see the Truth of what the Psalmist here affirms, that the Commandments of God are exceeding broad, extending to all Persons, Times, and Places, and comprehending the whole Duty of Man.

But tho the full Sense and Meaning of the Divine Law be so large and comprehensive, yet is there a close and intimate Connection between all the Parts and Precepts of it, and a necessary Dependence of one upon the other; being all so link'd and knit together by the Bond of Divine Authority, that whosoever breaketh any one of them is guilty of all: for so St. James expressly declares, that *he that offendeth in one point, is guilty of all*, James 2. 10.

Upon the whole then, The Latitude and Comprehensiveness of God's Law should put us all upon the serious Study and Meditation of it. This, we find, was the daily practice of our
Royal

Royal Psalmist, who made this the frequent Subject of his Meditation ; yea, we find him labouring hard to express the Love and Delight he took in it : *O how I love thy Law ! (saith he) 'tis my Meditation all the day ; and elsewhere, All the day long is my study in it.* And because the Precepts of it were of so large an extent, we find him often praying unto God to teach him his Statutes, and to open his eyes to see and learn the wondrous things of his Law : And 'tis our Duty and Wisdom too, to do likewise.

DISCOURSE III.

Exod. 20. 1, 2. *And God spake all these Words, saying, I am the Lord thy God, that brought thee out of the Land of Egypt, out of the House of Bondage.*

HAVING in some measure clear'd our way, by shewing the Obligation, the Excellence, and the Extent of the Decalogue or Ten Commandments ; I proceed now to

The Preface with which God Almighty himself was pleas'd to usher them in ; and this is contain'd in the words read, in which Moses having declar'd God to be the Author and Publisher of the Commandments, he brings him in saying, *I am the Lord thy God that brought thee out of the Land of Egypt, &c.* Which words, tho spoken immediately to the Jews, and upon the occasion of a particular Deliverance wrought for them, yet both the Nature of the Commandments, and the Reasons by which they are urg'd, shew them equally to concern and oblige all Mankind, as we shall see after.

In the words then we have two strong Arguments to enforce the Observance of the Ten Commandments.

The first is taken from the Sovereignty and Authority of the Lawgiver, in these words, *I am the Lord thy God.*

The second from his Mercy and Goodness, in those words, *That brought thee out of the Land of Egypt, &c.*

The one is design'd to awe, the other to allure us into Obedience ; both which must be therefore spoken to. And,

First, I am to begin with the Argument taken from the Sovereignty and Authority of the Lawgiver, in those words, *I am*
the

the Lord thy God: This is design'd to work upon our Fear, and to awe Men into Obedience to God's Laws. Greatness we know is apt to strike Dread and Terror into Offenders, it begets a Reverence to the Persons, and adds weight to the Words deliver'd by them; and therefore Princes are wont to affix their Name and Authority to their Laws, and to publish their Titles with their Proclamations, to excite Attention, and enforce Obedience to them. For this reason God Almighty, who is *King of Kings*, and *Lord of Lords*, to gain the greater Attention and Veneration to his Laws, displays his Greatness, proclaims his Glory, and prefaces his Commands with this august and awful Saying, *I am the Lord*.

The first Delivery of this Law on Mount *Sinai* was attended with many pompous Accents of Dread and Terror, with Thunder and Lightning, with the Sound of a Trumpet to alarm the Hearers, and make them afraid to transgress. After which we find the Prophets often bringing in God Almighty urging and inculcating his Precepts with this Saying, *I am the Lord*: And when the People seem'd too backward to believe or consider it, he threatens so to deal with them, as to make them know that *I am the Lord*. Indeed the best of us are but too apt to forget both God and our selves, to be unmindful of the Greatness of the one, and the Vileness of the other; and this occasions too great a neglect and carelessness of our Duty to both: and therefore we have need of something to awaken and awe us to the observance of God's Laws, and to stir up our Minds by way of remembrance, that we do not fall into a forgetfulness and contempt of them. This was the Design of God's prefixing these Words as a Prologue to his Precepts, to strike our Minds with a due Sense and Reverence of his Authority, and to awe us into Obedience to them.

Now this Sovereignty or Authority of God is founded upon the Right of Creation; for he having made all things, hath the best right to rule and govern them, and being the Author, is justly to be reckon'd the Lord of all: *It is he that hath made us* (saith the Psalmist) *and not we our selves*; and therefore it is he that must rule us, and not we our selves. *Hath not the Potter Power over the Clay* (saith the Apostle) *which he hath made and form'd?* and shall not God have Dominion over the Works of his own Hands? Indeed none else can, for none but he that made the World is fit and able to govern it; and the great Creator

must

must be the sole Commander and Disposer of all things. And as none may question his Right, so neither can any controul or resist his Power; he spake all things into Being with a Word, and can speak them all back again into nothing when he pleases: he holds this round World as a Ball in the hollow of his hand, and can toss and turn it as he will. *All the Nations unto him are but as the Drop of the Bucket, or the small Dust of the Ballance; yea they are all nothing, less than nothing, and Vanity, Isa. 40. 15, 17.* His Voice shakes the Heavens, and his Word makes the Earth and the World to tremble.

This is he that delivers his Commandments to us, the sole Lord and Sovereign Maker of all things, who hath a just Right to, and here challenges our Obedience. And that we might not forget or withhold it, this great Lawgiver himself, at the giving of his Law, hath thought fit to put us in mind of it, by ushering in his Precepts with these words, *I am the Lord.*

But this is not all: To this Declaration of his Sovereignty and supreme Authority, he is pleas'd to add another Term of Relation and Propriety, by stiling himself, the Lord our God; *I am the Lord thy God.* The words were first and principally spoken to the Jews, who were God's peculiar People, dignify'd and distinguish'd from all other Nations by many invaluable Favours and Privileges; *for to them appertain'd the Adoption, the Glory and the Covenants, the giving the Law and the Promises, Rom. 9. 4, 5.* God enter'd into a particular Covenant with them, and vouchsaf'd in a peculiar manner to be stil'd *their God*: He admitted them to all the Privileges of the Temple, from which all others were excluded by a Partition-Wall; but now that Inclosure is broken down, and God hath enlarg'd his Church by the Call and Coming in of the *Gentiles*: so that now we are all by Baptism admitted into Covenant with him, who is thereby become *to us a God, and we to him a People*; insomuch that we are as much bound to keep his Commandments as the *Israelites* were, and so are to look upon God as bespeaking us now, as he did them of old, *I am the Lord thy God.*

Thus I have consider'd the first Argument here urg'd in the Preface, taken from the Sovereignty and Authority of God, together with his peculiar right in us, and our dependance on him, contain'd in those words, *I am the Lord thy God.* From whence I proceed to the

Second, which is taken from his Mercy and Goodness, in those words, *Who brought thee out of the Land of Egypt, and out of the House of Bondage* : where, as the foregoing Argument was intended to work upon our Fear, and to awe us into Obedience ; so this is design'd to work upon our Love, and to allure us to the observance of his Laws.

But the Mercy here mention'd of Deliverance from the Land of Egypt was peculiar to the Jews only, who partook of it ; and how can that be any Argument to us, who never were in that House of Bondage, and so could not be said to be deliver'd from it ? To this two or three things will be necessary to be spoken.

1. Before this solemn Delivery of the Law on Mount *Sinai*, God was known and celebrated by other Titles and Tokens of his Love. From the Creation of the World to the days of *Abraham*, he was stil'd the Creator of Heaven, of Earth ; and all the Motives to Obedience were fetch'd from his Power in making, and his Care in providing for the Sons of Men. From the days of *Abraham* to *Moses*, he was call'd the God of *Abraham*, the God of *Isaac*, and the God of *Jacob*, from the Covenant he made with them ; and the encouragement to Obedience then was, *I am the Lord, that brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees, to give thee this good Land to inherit it*, Gen. 15. 7. In the time of *Moses*, when this great Deliverance from Egypt was wrought, the Stile was chang'd ; and the Law being then given, the Argument to enforce it was, *I am the Lord thy God that brought thee out of the Land of Egypt*, &c.

2. This Argument was very strong to the Jews to whom this Law was first given ; for the Misery and Bondage they underwent in Egypt was very sore and unsupportable ; they groan'd under heavy Burdens and cruel Taskmasters, they were requir'd to work without Materials, and to make Brick without Straw : instead of being rewarded, they were only whip'd and beaten for their Work ; their Complaints added to their Servitude, and all their Endeavours to ease and help themselves did but increase their Burdens. From this miserable Bondage they were deliver'd by a high Hand and an out-stretch'd Arm, God himself appearing in their Cause, and rescuing them from the Tyranny of *Pharaoh*, and the Oppression of his cruel Taskmasters ; for when that insolent and haughty Prince refus'd to obey his Maker's Call and Command to let his People go, he was follow'd

with those repeated Plagues and Judgments, that made him glad to be rid of them, and caus'd him not only to consent and assist in their Deliverance, but to petition for his own.

Now this great Mercy being done for them not above six Weeks before the giving of the Law, must needs be fresh in their Memorys, and could not but be a powerful Motive and Incentive to Obedience ; for who that had been so lately deliver'd from so great a Thralldom, would not think himself oblig'd to hearken to so mighty a Deliverer ?

For this reason it was that God Almighty, in his first Delivery of the Law to that People, beside the general Motives to Obedience from his being the Lord our God, which are common to all Mankind, made mention of this late memorable Deliverance from the Bondage of *Egypt*, which was peculiar to them, and could not in reason but mightily prevail with them.

3. Tho God Almighty took the Opportunity of that mighty Deliverance to enforce his Law upon them ; yet we find him afterward by the Prophets pressing the same Precepts from other new and occasional Instances of his Mercy and Goodness wrought for them : Hence we find the Prophet *Jeremy*, from God's reducing his People from Captivity, foretelling, *That the Days will come that they shall no more say, the Lord liveth which brought up the Children of Israel out of the Land of Egypt, but the Lord liveth that brought up the House of Israel out of the North Country, and other Countrys where they had been carry'd Captive*, Jer. 23. 7. So that 'tis not so much any one Instance of God's Goodness, tho one memorable one be here mention'd, as the general course of the Divine Mercy and Bounty, that is here made the Motive of Obedience.

4. The Deliverance of the *Israelites* from the Bondage of *Egypt*, was but a faint Type and Resemblance of our far greater Deliverance from a worse Thralldom to Ghostly Enemy's ; and therefore the Argument here us'd must hold much stronger upon us, than ever it did upon the *Jews* : for their Deliverance was only corporal, from the Hardships they endur'd under *Pharaoh* and his Taskmasters ; whereas ours is spiritual, from a more vile Bondage we were in to Sin and Satan : theirs was but temporal, from short and momentary Evils ; ours is eternal, from everlasting Misery and Destruction. And if to be rescu'd from the Land of *Egypt*, and the Cruelty of *Pharaoh*, hath been thought so powerful an inducement to the keeping of God's Command-

ments

ments ; how much greater is it to be for ever freed from the Rage and Malice of the Devil, and from all the Powers of Death and Hell ?

Now as the first Argument, taken from the Sovereignty and Authority of God, was founded on his Right of Creation ; so was this second, taken from his Mercy and Goodness, grounded on his Right of Redemption : for the Son of God bought us out of the hands of our Enemies with the Price of his own Blood, he laid down his own Life as a Ransom for ours. And whereas the Jews of old were deliver'd by the Blood of the *Paschal Lamb*, we were redeem'd only by the Blood of that immaculate *Lamb of God, that was slain to take away the Sins of the World*. And certainly this must be a much higher Incentive to the keeping of God's Laws, than any or all the temporal Deliverances of the Jews. Accordingly we find this Mercy of Redemption frequently urg'd in the New Testament as a Motive to Obedience: *We are bought with a Price (saith the Apostle) therefore let us glorify God both in our Souls and Bodies, which are his*. And elsewhere, *Being deliver'd out of the hands of our Enemies, we should serve him without fear, in Holiness and Righteousness all the days of our Life*.

Thus we see the strength of those two Arguments us'd here by God Almighty to usher in his Commandments ; the one taken from his Authority to enforce the Observance of them, *I am the Lord thy God* ; the other from his Mercy to oblige unto Obedience, *that brought thee out of the Land of Egypt*, and us from a worse than *Egyptian* Bondage.

To draw to a Conclusion : This Discourse may help to rectify two Mistakes that have been too easily hearken'd to and receiv'd by many Christians. The

One is, That to obey God from a Motive of Fear is servile.

The other is, That to serve him from the Hopes of Mercy or a Reward, is mercenary : Both which they think unacceptable and displeasing unto God.

Now these are no better than Suggestions of Satan, or the vain Surmises of a misgiving Heart ; for we find God Almighty here mentioning those Attributes that are most apt to excite both our Fear and our Hope, and urges our Obedience from Considerations drawn from both ; and therefore neither of them can be displeasing to him. For,

1. He puts us in mind of his absolute Sovereignty and Greatness, and likewise of his infinite Power, Authority and Wisdom ;

all which are imply'd in those words, *I am the Lord thy God*. By this he seeks to work upon our Fear, to awe us to our Duty, and to make us afraid to offend him; yea we find God Almighty frequently calling for our Fear: *If I be a Master, where is my Fear? saith the Lord of Hosts*, Mal. 1. 6. 'Tis made the Character of a wicked Person, that *he hath no fear of God before his Eyes*; and therefore we are bid to *stand in awe, and sin not*, the one being a great help to the other; and elsewhere we are call'd upon to *fear God and keep his Commandments*: And sure what God himself requires and prescribes to us can be no bad Principle of Obedience. Moreover,

2. He here stirs up the *Israelites* to their Duty, from the consideration of his great Mercy in delivering them from the Bondage of *Egypt*. And in sundry other Places we find him encouraging his People to Obedience, from the Hopes and Promises of a Reward; and therefore to serve him upon that account can be no more mercenary, than it is to love him because he is merciful.

3. From both these we learn the exceeding great Love and Kindness of our Maker, in using all ways to persuade us to our own good, tho our Righteousness extendeth not to him; for neither if we obey is he the better, nor if we refuse is he the worse; all the Benefit of the one, and the Danger of the other is intirely ours: yet he is pleas'd to court us to our Advantage, to accept of Mercy, and to avert our own Misery. Because Hope and Fear are the two ruling Passions of human Nature, he seeks by Rewards and Punishments to work on both, and by the most powerful Motives to invite or affright us to our Duty, letting us know our Subjection to his Power, and our Obligations to his Bounty; that he may command us as our Lord, who hath engag'd us as our Deliverer: All which should teach us to hearken to his Voice, and to keep his Commandments, which are so holy, just and good, as even to allure or constrain our Obedience.

DISCOURSE

DISCOURSE IV.

Exod. 20. 3. *Thou shalt have no other Gods before me.*

HAVING seen the Preface with which God Almighty ushers in the Commandments, together with the Arguments therein us'd to enforce the Observance of them: I proceed now to the Precepts themselves, which our Catechism here tells us are Ten. The

First whereof is contain'd in these Words, *Thou shalt have no other Gods before or beside me.* In this, as in all the following Commandments, we are, according to the forecited Rules, to observe something requir'd, and something forbidden. The things requir'd in this first Commandment are chiefly these three:

First, That we all have a God.

Secondly, That we have the true God for our God. And,

Thirdly, That we have no other beside him.

First, I say, we are all requir'd here to have a God; for when we are commanded to have no other Gods but him, it is manifestly imply'd that we are to have a God. By a God here we understand a Being of infinite Power, Wisdom, Justice and Holiness, who made all things, and upon whom they all depend.

By having a God, we understand not only the Believing or Assenting in our Minds that there is such a Being, but likewise the demeaning our selves towards him accordingly, and acting futable to such a Belief, that is, in conformity to his Nature and Will; for they who do otherwise cannot be said to have a God, but to reject him, and say with them in the Gospel, *We will not have this Man to reign over us.* To have any for our King, is to yield Obedience to him; and to have a God, is to live in all humble Duty and Subjection to him: and therefore our Catechism describes the having of a God, not barely by believing the Truth of his Being, but by loving, fearing, worshipping, trusting, honouring and serving of him: all which being imply'd in this Expression, and consequently requir'd in this Commandment, must be briefly handled.

1. Thee

1. The having of a God implys the loving of him above all things. Love is that Passion of the Soul, that inclines it to unite it self to an Object that appears to it good and desirable. I stile it *a Passion of the Soul*, because 'tis seated within, and resides not in the Lip or the Tongue, but in the Heart; and therefore our Saviour wills us, to *love God with all our Heart, and with all our Soul, and with all our Mind*: And the Apostle, *To love not in Word or in Tongue, but in Deed and in Truth*.

Again, I stile it a Passion of the Soul, *that inclines it to unite it self to something*. This is a natural and constant Fruit of Love, to desire the greatest Intimacy and nearest Union, to delight in the Company and closest Embraces of the beloved Object; 'tis impatient of its Absence, and nothing pleases more than the Sight and Enjoyment of it.

Lastly, I stile it a Passion that inclines to unite with something *that appears good and desirable*; for if it appear otherwise, 'twill be the Object of our Hatred, not of our Love: nothing but what is really or apparently good can affect this Passion, or be belov'd by us.

Now God being the greatest Good, infinitely good in himself, and the Fountain of all Goodness in his Creatures, is to have our highest and most superlative Love. The very Notion of a God implys a Being that hath all perfection, and whatever is good in any other is merely deriv'd from him; and therefore he being in the highest respects lovely, is to have the chiefest Seat in our Affection, yea he is to have our whole Heart, and our strongest Desires: and these are to discover themselves in a desire of pleasing, and a desire of enjoying him, which are the constant Fruits and Effects of true Love.

(1.) The Love we bear unto God must discover it self in hearty Desires and Endeavours of pleasing him; he that loves another will be doing what is most grateful and pleasing to him. And as a Tree is known by its Fruit, so may our Love to God be discern'd by this Touchstone: *If you love me (saith Christ) keep my Commandments*, John 14. 15. And elsewhere, *Hereby know we the Love of God, if we keep his Commandments*.

(2.) The Love of God will put us upon strong Desires of enjoying him, making us to say with David, *As the Hart panteth after the Water-brooks, so panteth my Soul after thee, O God: My Soul is athirst for God, Oh when shall I come and appear in the Presence of God!* This will make us desirous of enjoying him in his

his Ordinances now, and to unite with him in Grace here, that we may be fitted for a more compleat Fruition of him in Glory hereafter. In a word,

To have a God, is thus to love and be affected towards him, which should put us all upon the Trial of our Affection to him, to cherish this sacred Flame where we find it, and to enkindle it in the Breasts where 'tis wanting.

2. The having of a God implies the Fear of him: This is such an awful Regard and Reverence of the Divine Majesty, as makes us afraid to offend or displease him. And as the Love of God is grounded on the transcendent Excellency and Goodness of his Nature, which makes us willing to please and enjoy him; so the Fear of him is founded on his infinite Power and Justice, which may well enough make us afraid to provoke him. He that considers the Justice of God to be such, that he cannot clear the Guilty; and likewise that his Power is great enough to reach and humble the stoutest Offenders, may be easily induc'd to stand in awe of him, and be fearful of displeasing him: and therefore our Saviour wills us to *fear him, who is able to destroy both Body and Soul in Hell*, Mat. 10. 28. The Psalmist bids us to *serve the Lord with Fear, and to rejoice before him with Trembling*, Psal. 2. 11. yea the wise Man declares *the Fear of the Lord to be the beginning of Wisdom*; and elsewhere, 'tis made the end of the Commandments, and in some sense the fulfilling of the Law.

There is indeed a servile slavish Fear, proceeding from wrong Apprehensions of God, as a sour, stern and implacable Being; and the Love before-mention'd expels this kind of Fear, which disposes Men not only to dread but to hate him. In this sense it is that the Apostle tells us, *There is no Fear in Love, but perfect Love casteth out Fear, and he that thus feareth is not made perfect in Love*. But there is a more ingenuous and filial Fear, proceeding from a sense of the Goodness, as well as the Power of God, which renders Men not only afraid, but ashamed to offend him. This is that Fear recommended by the Prophet, who wills us to *fear the Lord for his Goodness*, and is that awful Reverence and Regard of him that is to be kept up in the Breasts of all good Christians; for this is both a Spur to quicken them to their Duty, and a Curb to restrain them from the Practice of Evil: and therefore we find frequent Exhortations to this Vertue, to *work out our Salvation with Fear and Trembling*, and to *serve God acceptably with Reverence and godly Fear*; which is one great Act of our having or owning him for our God.

3. The

3. The having of a God, implys the worshipping and adoring of him: This is a Tribute we all owe to the Supreme Being, and is indeed peculiar to him; to acknowledg his Infinite and Adorable Perfections; to pray to him for all that we want, and to praise him for all that we receive; to be sensible of our daily need and dependance upon him; to implore his Aid and Assistance in all our Affairs, and to ask his Blessing upon all that we undertake; to beseech him to avert from us all manner of Evil, and to bestow upon us all kinds of Good; and that not only for our selves, but for all others that we stand obliged to pray for. All this we find frequently call'd for, and inculcated upon us; *Let Prayers and Supplications, Intercessions and giving of Thanks be made for all Men,* 1 Tim. 2. 1. *Praying always with all Prayer and Supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance,* Eph. 6. 18.

This Homage is to be paid to him, not only in publick, by the solemn and unanimous Addresses of the whole Church, but likewise in private, by the joint Requests of each particular Family; and in secreet too, by the hearty and devout Prayers of the Closet. Moreover, this Divine Worship is to be offer'd up, partly with our Souls, in inward desires and breathings after him; partly with our Bodys, by bowing down and kneeling before him, and in all the decent Postures of Humility and Adoration. All this is included in the owning or having a God; of which 'twill behove us therefore to be always mindful.

4. The having of a God, implies our trusting and relying upon him. The first Conception we form of a Deity, is his being the Omnipotent Creator and Conserver of the World, that he made all things by his Power, and still preserves them by his Providence; both which are sufficient Motives of our Trust and Confidence in him: for these may abundantly satisfy us, that he wants neither Ability nor Will to help us in our greatest Extremities. Hence we find our Blessed Saviour cautioning his Followers against all carking and anxious care about earthly things; willing them to take no perplexing *Thoughts of Food or Raiment*; for he that feeds the Beasts, and clothes the Grass of the Field, will not see his own Children to lack Necessaries: *After these things* (says he) *do the Gentiles seek*, who know not God; whereas our Heavenly Father knows that we have need of all these things; and if we seek first the Kingdom of God, and the Righteousness thereof, these things shall be added unto us. To the same purpose the Apostle wills us, to cast all our care upon him who careth for us:

Not

Not that we should neglect the Duties of our Calling, or throw off all care of our own Safety and Welfare; but that we banish all distrustful Fears of Divine Providence, and *commit our selves to God in well-doing*; not going out of his way, nor betaking our selves to any indirect Means to provide for our own Safety, but relying upon him for the supply of all our Wants, and for support in all Dangers and Temptations. This the knowledg and belief of a God exacts from us, and therefore ought at all times, and in all cases to be perform'd by us.

5. The having of a God, implys the honouring and glorifying of him: This the transcendent Excellencies both of his Nature and Works justly challenge from us; for there are those apparent Marks of Infinite Power, Wisdom and Goodness, upon all the Works of his Hand, that may set all considering Persons upon the magnifying and adoring of him. We find the Royal Psalmist spending the greatest part of his time, in extolling, praising and glorifying of God, and likewise calling upon others to do the same; *I will magnify thy Name, O Lord, and praise my God while I have my Being. Praise the Lord all ye Saints, for a pleasant and joyful thing it is to be thankful.*

Now this honouring of God, is to speak and think worthily of him, to endeavour to be like him in all his imitable Perfections, and to direct all our Actions to his Glory. To these we have many Precepts and Examples in Holy Scripture; *Whether ye eat or drink, or whatever ye do (says the Apostle) do all to the Praise and Glory of God, 1 Cor. 10.* And elsewhere, *Glorify God both in your Souls and Bodies, which are his.* Yea, we find God himself challenging this from us by the Relation he stands in to us, *If I be a Father, where is my Honour? says the Lord of Hosts: And likewise encouraging to the practice of it, Them that honour me, I will honour; and they that despise me, shall be lightly esteem'd.*

Lastly, The having of a God, implies the serving him truly all the days of our Life. Among other Titles and Relations which God takes upon him, we find him stiling himself our Lord and Master, who hath therefore the Right to command and govern us. Now the Duty of a Servant we know is to obey, and that not with a grumbling and unwilling Mind, but with a chearful and ready Obedience: And this is more especially due to our Master in Heaven, who is both our Maker and Redeemer; and therefore to be serv'd truly, that is, *not with Eye-service as Men-pleasers, but with a ready Mind as unto the Lord, and not unto Men.*

Moreover, he is to be serv'd, not only sincerely but constantly, that is, all the days of our Life; we must not shrink from, or grow weary of his Service, but persevere and hold on in it even to the End.

All these things are included in the having of a God, which is the first thing requir'd in this Commandment.

The *Second* is, That we are not only to have or own a God, but to have the Lord *Jehovah*, or the true God for our God; for when we are commanded to have no other God beside him, it manifestly implies that we are to have him for our God: meaning, that the God of *Israel* that brought them out of the Land of Egypt, as appears by the Preamble, is to be taken for the true God, and to receive the foremention'd Acknowledgments. The Groundwork of all Religion, and the Foundation of all our Hope lie in owning and believing the true God, and therefore 'twas fit that this should be known and settled in the first Commandment; for a Mistake here would be not only dangerous, but deadly, and at once corrupt the Worship, and destroy the whole Design and Success of it: For which Reason we are here directed and requir'd to have the one true God, or the Lord *Jehovah* for our God. He of whom *Moses* affirms, that he made Heaven and Earth; He who made a Covenant with *Abraham*, and miraculously deliver'd the *Israelites* out of the House of Bondage, is here made the Object of our Adoration; He it is that is to have our Prayers, Praises, and all Divine Honours. In a word, He it is that must be lov'd, fear'd and trusted above all things. For this we have abundant reason, not only from the excellence of his Nature, and the greatness of his Works, but from our intire dependence upon him for *Life, Breath, and all things*. Hence we find *Moses* declaring him to be *glorious in Holiness, fearful in Praises, doing Wonders*. And the Elders in the *Revelations* are ever saying, *Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive Honour and Glory, for thou hast created all things, and for thy Pleasure they are and were created*.

Beside, he hath blest the World with the best Revelation of Divine Truths that was ever made to it; he hath given the most rational, just and equitable Laws to Mankind, and crowns all their Service with the most noble and ample Reward: which is abundant encouragement to have the Lord for our God, the second thing requir'd in this Commandment.

The *Third* and last is, That we should have Him only, or no other beside Him; meaning, that we should make the true God,
or

or the God of *Israel*, the sole Object of Divine Worship, and give no Divine Honours to any else: and so 'tis in effect the same with that Precept of our Saviour, *Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve*, Matth. 4. This was indeed the principal thing intended in this Commandment; for the *Israelites* to whom this Law was first given, were too prone to forget God, to fall into Idolatry, and worship the Gods of the *Egyptians*: and therefore to prevent this, he minds them of the peculiar Right he had in them, and the great things he had done for them, beginning the Decalogue with this strict Precept, *Thou shalt have no other Gods before me*. Which words may admit of a double Sense; either *thou shalt have no other Gods before*, that is, above me; or, *thou shalt have no other Gods before*, that is, beside or together with me.

1. They who love, fear, or trust to any thing more than God, as the Worldling does to *Mammon*, have other Gods before or above the true God; for which reason the covetous Man is stil'd an *Idolater*. Again,

They who make their Belly their God, and delight chiefly in Luxury and Intemperance, have other Gods above him: They who give the chiefest of their Time and Affections to sinful Pleasures, and prefer the Serving of their Lusts, before the Service of their Maker, have other Gods, and set up the Abomination of their Eyes and Hearts above him.

Moreover, they who give more Divine Honour, and offer up more Prayers and Praises to other Things or Persons, than to the true God, have other Gods before or above him; of which they may do well to consider, who for one *Pater Noster* made to God, have ten *Ave Marias* to the Blessed Virgin.

2. They that join any in copartnership with the true God, or set up any Rival Deities, have other Gods before or beside him. This was the Fault of the *Samaritans*, of whom we read, That they feared the Lord, and served their own Gods, after the manner of the Nations whom God carried away from thence, 2 Kings 17. 33. They mixed and blended the Service of the true, with that of false Gods: And how much the worshipping of Saints and Angels, and the giving Divine Honours to other things beside God, does resemble this, it will behove some Persons to consider.

Thus we see what is requir'd in this Commandment, namely, to own the only true God, and to demean our selves towards him, futable to his Greatness and our dependance upon him: To

this, not only the Authority of our Maker, but our own Interest, that is, our present Peace, and our future Happiness, are sufficient Motives to incline us.

DISCOURSE V.

Exod. 20. 3. *Thou shalt have no other Gods before me.*

I Shew'd in my last the Duties requir'd in this first Commandment; which were, to have a God, to have the True God, and to have no other beside him: I proceed now to consider what is forbidden in it, which are chiefly these three great Sins, opposite to the foremention'd Dutys.

First, Atheism, which is the having of no God.

Secondly, Idolatry, which is the having of a false God.

Thirdly, Polytheism, which is the having of more or many Gods. All which must be briefly explain'd, that we may the better learn to hate and avoid them. And,

First, I must begin with that great daring Sin of Atheism, here forbidden as the Rise and Foundation of all Impiety: for if Religion be founded on the having of a God, then all Ungodliness and Irreligion must proceed from denying of him. Of this the Psalmist speaks, in *Psal. 14. 1. The Fool hath said in his Heart, There is no God.* And then it follows, *Corrupt are they, and become abominable; there is none that doth good, no not one.* Where he plainly supposes, that there are but too many who vainly surmise there is no God; and likewise brands all those for Fools who say or think so, as running them into the greatest Evils and Dangers. Now the Atheism here forbidden, is both Speculative and Practical. The

Former is the inward Belief of the Mind, that there is no God: the latter is the living and acting as if there were none.

For the First: Since the Volume of the Creation lies open to the view of all, in which the invisible things of God are so clearly seen, even his Eternal Power and Godhead, it cannot but seem strange that any should be found to question or disbelieve either; yea, since the Voice of Nature and Conscience is so loud, that

the

the sound of them is gone over the World, and there is no Speech or Language where their Voice is not heard, one would think it impossible for any to doubt or deny his Being, were it not that the sad Experience of former as well as the present times may convince us, that the World always had some such Monsters. But these being not so numerous, and being condemn'd by the general vogue and consent of Mankind, who almost universally own a first Cause of all Things, and feel a natural Inclination to worship him; I shall leave these to the Terrors and Convictions of their own Mind, and proceed,

2dly, To the practical Atheists, who by their Words profess to own and believe a God, but in their Works deny him: And with these, alas! the World does but too much abound, who pretend to own a Deity, and yet live as if there were none. Such practical Atheists are as bad if not worse than the Speculative; for to slight and contemn a God, whom we acknowledg for such, is worse than barely to disbelieve him. He who thinks there is no God, acts agreeable to his Persuasion, when he refuses to worship or fear what is not; whereas he that owns a Being of infinite Power and Goodness, and yet casts off the Fear or Love of him, acts of all Men the most absurdly, for he acts contrary to his Persuasion, and confutes his own Pretences. The speculative Atheist neglects his Maker, but the practical Atheist contemns him; the one denies his Being, the other reproaches his Nature, and highly affronts him whom he would be thought to serve.

Now this is plainly forbidden in this Commandment; for if the having of a God here requir'd imply the Love, Fear and Worship of such a Being; then the contrary to these, which suppose the rejecting of him, must be here condemn'd. So that,

1. The casting off the Love of God, either in whole or in part, is a manifest breach of this Commandment: for if the Excellencies of the Divine Nature, and our great Obligations to his Goodness, render him the proper object of our Love, and require the most superlative degrees of Affection; then all coldness or lukewarmness toward him must be a sinful neglect, and rather a disowning of him, than having him for our God. If we are commanded to *love the Lord our God with all our Heart, and with all our Mind, and with all our Strength*; then to set our Heart upon any thing more than him, is to become unworthy of him, by acting unworthily towards him.

2. The casting off the Fear of God, and entertaining false and unbecoming Fears of him, are both forbidden in this Commandment, as inconsistent with the true Belief and owning of such a Being: the former of these is the Sin of Supineness or carnal Security, which is the not fearing where we ought; the latter of Superstition, which is the *fearing where no fear is*: the one proceeds from the having no thoughts of God; the other from having wrong thoughts of him. The Psalmist speaks of some, that *they have no fear of God before their Eyes*; and gives this reason of it, that *God was not in all their Thoughts; his Ways are always grievous to them, and his Judgments remov'd out of their sight*, Psal. 10. 4, 5. And 'tis no wonder if they fear not God, who seldom or never think of him. Again,

He tells us of others that *fear where no Fear is*; and this proceeds from wrong and mistaken Apprehensions of God, taking him for a sour, stern and severe Being, that is displeas'd at every Thing, and often angry without a Cause. Of both these we have but too many Instances: Some having little or no awe or sense of a Deity, which makes them *run into an excess of Riot, and commit all uncleanness with greediness*. Others having base and servile Fears of him, which make them abstain from some indifferent and unforbidden Rites as displeasing to him, and to seek to please and atone him by many uncommanded Austerities; both which Practices being opposite to the true sense of having a God, are forbidden in this Commandment.

3. The casting off the Worship and Service of God is another piece of practical Atheism, condemn'd by this Commandment; for this, instead of having a God, is a virtual Contempt and denying of him. The very notion of a Deity supposes him to be the Maker and Governor of the World, and the Preserver of all Things contain'd therein; upon which account there is a peculiar Homage and Service due to him, and this consists in acknowledging and adoring his infinite Perfections, in praying to him for what we want, and praising of him for all that we receive. Now to refuse this Homage is in effect to despise and disown him, and to say with them in the book of Job, *Depart from us, we desire not the knowledge of thy ways*.

4. The casting off our trust and dependence upon God, is another breach of this Commandment, for this is a virtual denial of most of his Attributes. God Almighty hath interested his Power, Wisdom and Goodness for the supply and succour of his

his People in all their Exigencies ; he hath promised to *give Grace and Glory, and to withhold no good thing from them that diligently seek and trust to him* : whereby he hath engag'd his Truth and Faithfulness to defend and provide for them, and confirm'd all this with an Oath for their greater Security and Consolation. Now to distrust him after all this, is to call in question his Power, Goodness and Truth, and to doubt whether he be able or willing to be as good as his word : both which cast unworthy Reflections upon his Nature, and undermine the belief of his Being. 'Tis for this reason that unbelief and distrust of God are so severely sentenc'd in Holy Scripture, because they virtually put the lie upon Truth it self, and charge the Almighty with Impotence or Imposture.

Lastly, The casting off the Yoke of Obedience to the divine Precepts, is practical Atheism, and in effect the having of no God, which is prohibited in this Commandment ; for we owe to the supreme Being, not only the Tribute of Love, but the Homage of Subjection and Obedience, and a firm belief of him will draw this after it, and enforce this Duty upon us. So that where this is refus'd or neglected, Men shake off the Yoke, and say in effect, they will not have him for their God, or own him as their Lord and Master. In short,

All unbecoming Carriage towards our Maker, all demeaning our selves unfutable to our relation to or dependence upon him, are here condemn'd by this Law, as a direct affront to his Authority and Attributes ; and they who allow themselves in any ungodly Courses, deny God in their Lives, tho they own him with their Lips, and act upon a principle of Atheism and Infidelity, the first great Sin forbidden in this Commandment, *the having of no God*. The

Second is Idolatry, which is the *having of a false God* : This was the Sin of the *Egyptians* and other idolatrous Nations, against whom this Commandment was first levelled ; for the *Israelites*, whom God had selected for his own peculiar People, living and conversing among them, were too prone to fall into their ways, and in danger of being infected by their Idolatries : and therefore to prevent this, God Almighty, consulting his own Glory and their Good, gave them this Precept, that they should *have no other Gods but him*. We find the *Egyptians* and others substituting false Gods in the room of the true, and giving those divine Honours

honours to Creatures, that were due only to the Creator; they worship'd the Sun, Moon and Stars, with the whole Host of Heaven, being tempted thereunto by the good Influence they have on this lower World, and the many Benefits they receiv'd thereby: they paid divine Honours to Beasts, inanimate Creatures, and all manner of creeping Things; yea, they fell down to Stocks and Stones, and other Workmanship of their own Hands. The *Egyptians* had their *Apis* and *Serapis*, whom they worship'd in the form of a Calf; their Gods grew in their Gardens, for they paid their Devotions to Mint and Rue, and shed religious Tears before the Leek and the Onion. These idolatrous Practices had too much prevail'd upon God's own People, for we find them so inveigled by them, that *Aaron* and the *Israelites*, in *Moses's* absence, fell to making and worshipping a molten Calf: And when they were brought out of that Land, even in their Journey to *Canaan*, they often hanker'd after the Leeks and Onions of *Egypt*. And being so prone to Idolatry, and to be carry'd away to the worshipping of false Gods, this Precept was again renew'd and enforc'd upon them in the book of *Deuteronomy*, in which they were strictly charg'd, to *have no other Gods but him*.

But this grosser sort of Idolatry being now rarely found in the Christian World, I shall not need to enlarge farther upon it.

There is then another sort of Idolatry forbidden in this Commandment, and that is, the worshipping of Saints and Angels and the Virgin *Mary*, and giving those divine Honours to Creatures that are due to God only: this the Apostle condemns as will-worship, *Col. 2. 18.* and was refus'd by the Angel in the *Revelations*, saying, *see thou do it not, worship God*. There is indeed a civil Worship due to the Vertues of great and good Men, and some kind of Veneration may be paid to the Memories of departed Saints; but for the religious Honours of Adoration, Prayer and Invocation, those are peculiar to God only, and may not without Idolatry be communicated to any Creature. But beside this,

There is another sort of Idolatry too common among Men, and that is, the paying higher degrees of Love, Fear and Trust to any other Thing than we do to God: This is to make that, whatever it be, our God; and by giving it the highest room in our Affections, we set up an Idol in our Heart; which is the having to our selves a false God, the second great Sin forbidden in this Commandment. The

Third and Last is Polytheism, which is the having many or more Gods than one. This seems to be condemn'd by the letter of this Law, in which God to preserve his People from multiplying of Deitys, according to the Custom of the Heathens, willed them to *have no other Gods but himself*. The *Chaldeans*, *Philistines* and *Egyptians* of old multiplied their Gods, according to the number of their Cities; they had a God for each particular Blessing they wanted, and implor'd a distinct Deity for every Disease; yea, their number grew so great at last, that according to *Varro's* Computation, they amounted to three thousand. The Gentiles, as the Apostle tells us, *worshipped they knew not what*; the *Athenians* erected an Altar to the *unknown God*; and some to encrease the number of their Gods, worship'd the very Devil.

The Idolatry of these Heathens consisted in giving divine Worship where it should not, which might be to any one false God; but their Polytheism consisted in heaping up Deitys, and having more Gods than they should: So that tho all Polytheism be Idolatry, yet all Idolatry is not Polytheism. Now to prevent both these, to which the World was at that time too much addicted, God Almighty gave this strait Charge, *Thou shalt have no other Gods before me*.

Indeed the very Notion of a God implies Unity, and cannot be more than One: 'Tis absurd to affirm, there can be two first Causes of all Things, nor can there be more independent Beings upon which all Things else depend, both which are implied in the Notion of a Deity; and therefore to have more Gods than one, is in effect to have none at all.

Thus we see both what is requir'd in this first Commandment, *viz.* to have the only true God for our God, and to Love, Fear, Trust and Honour him accordingly; and likewise what is forbidden in it, namely, the having of no God, a false God or many Gods: all which are highly offensive to our Maker, and destructive of all Religion. To conclude then,

Let us hence learn to demean our selves as we ought to God Almighty, not substituting any thing in his room, nor taking any in Copartnership with him, but making him the sole and entire object of our Honour and Adoration.

DISCOURSE VI.

Exod. 20. 4, 5, 6. *Thou shalt not make unto thy self any graven Image, nor the likeness of any thing that is in Heaven above, or in the Earth beneath, or in the Water under the Earth: Thou shalt not bow down to them, or worship them; for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the Fathers upon the Children, to the third and fourth Generation of them that hate me, and shewing Mercy to thousands, in them that love me, and keep my Commandments.*

GOD Almighty having in the first Commandment settled the true Object of divine Worship, and confin'd it wholly to himself, in opposition to all manner of Idols or false Gods; he proceeds in this second Commandment to direct us in the right manner of performing it; which is not by any Images or visible Representations of him, but in a more spiritual manner, and in a way suited to his Nature and Will: This is the design of these words, *Thou shalt not make to thy self any graven Image, &c.*

Now this Commandment being Negative, I must consider first, what is forbidden, and then what is commanded in it. I begin then with what is forbidden, and that is chiefly these two Things; the *Making*, and the *Worshipping of any graven Image*. For the

First, We are here expressly forbidden to *make to our selves any graven Image, or the likeness, &c.*

Not that all making of Images, Pictures or Representations of any Creature is hereby prohibited, or that the Trade of the Painter, Carver or Engraver are simply unlawful, as some have vainly imagin'd: for we find some Images made and appointed by the order of God himself, as the Cherubims, the golden Mice, the brazen Serpent and the like; and *Moses* ascribes the Skill of *Aholiab* and *Bezaliel* in working the Work of an Engraver to the Holy Spirit of God, Exod. 35. 31. So that all Images or Representations of things are not here absolutely forbidden, for that would condemn all Pictures or likenesses of any Thing, and render our very Coin unlawful.

But

But the Images here forbidden to be made, are Images of God, or Representations of the Divine Nature, which being spiritual and immaterial may not be represented by any bodily Shape; yea God being infinite and incomprehensible, cannot be represented by, or thought to be inclos'd in any Image without debasing and disparaging of him. And therefore the Prophet asks the question, *To whom will ye liken God?* or what likeness will ye compare to him? *Isa. 40. 18.* The Apostle wills us *not to think the Godhead to be like unto Gold or Silver, or Stone graven by the Art and Invention of Men, Acts 17. 29.* And much less to *change the Glory of the incorruptible God into an Image made like to corruptible Man, to Birds, or four-footed Beasts, or creeping Things, Rom. 1. 23.*

There is such a vast disproportion between an Image and the Divine Nature, that we cannot liken one to the other without belying and affronting it: for since an Image can only be made of Corporeal Things, and such as are finite and corruptible, to make an Image of God, is to bring down that infinite Being to the scantiness and dimensions of a finite Creature, and in effect to deny the Spirituality and Incorruptibility of his Nature. And therefore we find a very strict Charge given to the *Israelites* against this Image-making, *Deut. 4. 15.* *Take good heed unto yourselves, for ye saw no Image in the day when the Lord spake unto you in Horeb, out of the midst of the Fire, that you corrupt not yourselves, and make you a graven Image.* And in this Commandment we have an express Prohibition of making any likeness of God by any thing *either in Heaven above, as by the Sun, Moon and Stars; or in the Earth beneath, as by the Fowl of the Air, the four-footed Beasts or creeping Things; or in the Water under the Earth, by the Fish or any thing that walks through the Paths of the Sea; no, nor yet by the likeness of Man, the Lord of all these.* For tho God made Man in his own Image, yet Man is not to make God in his, by reason of the infinite distance and disproportion between them: and tho he be sometimes describ'd in Scripture with Eyes, Hands and Arms, and the like, yet this is merely in compliance with our Infirmities, and is spoken after the manner of Men, and is to be understood in a way becoming the Divine Majesty; but cannot warrant the making any Image of him, or picturing him in a human Shape, which is to prostitute our Maker, and to think him such a one as our selves: yea, this is to confine Ubiquity to a place, to circumscribe Immensity, and to degrade the Deity to the properties and infirmities of human Nature.

ture. We may not then represent God in a bodily Shape, or form false Apprehensions of him in our mind by making him like our selves, the first thing forbidden in this Commandment.

Secondly, As we may not make, so much less are we permitted to worship any Image or Representation of God, *Thou shalt not bow down to it or worship it*; where we have mention made of a twofold Worship, The one

External, consisting in the outward reverence and bowing of the Body. The other

Internal, in the inward Worship and Reverence of the Mind: Both which are here forbidden to be given to any Image.

1. We are forbidden to give any bodily Worship to Images, by bowing or falling down to them; *Thou shalt not bow down to them*. The *Israelites* were strictly charg'd *not to serve other Gods, or bow themselves unto them*. And such were sharply reprov'd, that *bowed the knee to Baal*, or fell down before any Idol. The Idolatry of the Heathens is frequently set forth by the Gestures of Incurvation, Prostration, Geniculation, and other visible Acts of bodily Reverence us'd to their false Deities; which being Tokens of the inward Delight and Devotion of their Minds towards them, were Invasions of God's Prerogative, and therefore strictly prohibited by him. But,

2. The internal Worship and Reverence of the Heart, is here chiefly forbidden to be given to Images; for this is to make them Gods, and to give the Glory due to God only, to the Works of Mens Hands, which is Idolatry to be abhor'd of all Christians.

3. Not only the worshipping of Images, but of God by them, is here forbidden in this Commandment. The worshipping of false Gods is the Idolatry condemn'd in the first Commandment; the worshipping the true God in a false way, is the Idolatry forbidden in this. The ruder and more barbarous Nations, that mistook the Object of Worship, and paid it to Stocks and Stones, were guilty of the former; some of the wiser and more knowing among the Heathens, who when *they knew God*, yet *glorified him not as God*, were guilty of the latter: these too are in Scripture stil'd Idolaters, as we read in the first Chapter to the *Romans*, where these wiser Heathens are charg'd with it, because tho they knew God by the Creation of the World, yet they worship'd him in a way unfutable to his Nature, namely by Images and corporeal Resemblances of him, *changing his Glory into the Similitude of Men, Beasts and Birds*: and tho they did not terminate their Worship

in

in the Images, but only serv'd God by them, it being impossible for the wiser part of them to take that for a God or Maker of the World, which they either made with their own Hands, or saw made with their own Eyes; yet their serving of God this way so unworthy of him, is in Scripture call'd Idolatry. This some Persons in the World may do well to consider, who worship God much after the same way, and seek to salve it with the same Distinctions.

'Tis most certain that there is a peculiar and incommunicable piece of Homage due to the great Creator of all Things, upon the account of his infinite and adorable Perfections, and our great Obligations to him: this is what we call divine Worship, and is challeng'd by God himself in the Old Testament, and confin'd to him by our Saviour in the New, in those words, *Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.* And tho they who give some of this elsewhere, as upon Images and other Things, would excuse it by making these things not the Objects of Worship, but only means and helps to direct and carry it farther, even to God himself; yet 'tis to be fear'd that too much of it falls by the way on the Image, and that God is rob'd of all that miscarries, or falls beside him. And therefore to prevent this, I shall proceed in the

Next place to the Sanction by which this Prohibition is enforc'd, and that is taken

Partly, from God Almighty's jealousy and tendernefs for his Honor; *For I the Lord thy God am a jealous God.* And partly, from his just Indignation and severe Punishment of those that violate and invade it, *Visiting the iniquities of the Fathers upon the Children, unto the third and fourth Generation of them that hate me.* For the

First, The Jealousy of God is a sufficient affrightment from offering this kind of Affront or Indignity to him: for if the Jealousy of a Man be justly to be dreaded of all that give occasion for it, because it stirs up the highest resentment of such a violation of his Honor, and arms him with a more than ordinary Courage to vindicate it; and tho the cause of it be Love, yet the effect is commonly Revenge and Ruin, for which reason *Solomon* stiles Jealousy *the Rage of a Man*, Prov. 6. 34. certainly the Jealousy of God, who is more tender of his Honor, and far more able to repair it, is much more to be dreaded by all wilful Invaders of it.

That

That God is thus tender and jealous in this Case, impatient of any Rival, and will not admit any sharers with him in the Love and Honor we are to pay him, himself hath frequently told us: *I am the Lord* (saith he by the Prophet *Isaiah*) *this is my Name, and my Glory will I not give to another, nor my Praise to graven Images*, Isa. 42. 8. In this Commandment he adds, *I am the Lord thy God*, in Covenant with thee, having betroth'd thee to my self, and singl'd thee out to set my Love upon thee, and therefore will not bear the invading of my Honor, nor suffer thee to go a whoring after other Vanities: By this, Idolatry appears to be a spiritual Adultery, a violation of the Love and Duty we owe to our Maker, express'd in Scripture by *committing Fornication against him*, and is therefore said to *provoke the Lord to Jealousy*.

Now the Jealousy here ascrib'd to God must not be taken for such a disquieting vexatious Passion, as is wont to ruffle and discompose Mankind in such Cases; for that is not compatible with the divine Nature, but must be understood by way of Accommodation and Similitude, signifying that God will stand affected towards the breakers of this Law, as Men are wont to be that are edg'd on and enrag'd by Jealousy, and will deal with them as one mov'd with that violent Passion, tho at the same time it cannot in the least impair or interrupt his own Felicity. Furthermore,

The word *El-kanah* here signifies a *Strong* as well as a *Jealous God*, and gives us to understand that he is able to vindicate his Honor, and will certainly punish all the injuries offer'd to it. Jealousy of it self without strength is but an impotent and contemptible Passion; but when arm'd with an Almighty Power, it is justly terrible, then 'tis *Cruel as the Grave* (as *Solomon* expresses it) *the Coals thereof are as the Coals of Fire, which break into a vehement Flame*, Cant. 8. 6. And therefore *Moses* in this very Precept about Images, minds the *Israelites*, *The Lord thy God is a consuming Fire, he is a jealous God*: And elsewhere brings in God Almighty thus declaring, *They have moved me to Jealousy with that which is not God, they have provoked me to Anger with their Vanities: A Fire is kindled in mine Anger, and shall burn to the lowest Hell; and shall consume the Earth with her Increase, and set on fire the Foundations of the Mountains*, Deut. 32. 21, 22.

And now I may well enough ask the Apostle's Question of all that suffer their Hearts and Affections to stray from their Maker,

ker, *Do we provoke the Lord to Jealousy, are we stronger than he?* Can thy Heart bear up, or thy Hands be strong in the Day that he shall deal with thee? No, 'tis a fearful thing to fall into the Hands of the living God, into which the forsaking of God, and the following of Idols, will certainly cast us.

And this will lead me to the

Second part of the Sanction of this Law, taken from the Justice of God in punishing the breakers of it, in those words, *Visiting the iniquities of the Fathers upon the Children to the third and fourth Generation of them that hate me.* To visit is sometimes taken in a good sense, for beholding another with an eye of Pity and Compassion; in which sense David prays, *Visit me, O Lord, with thy Salvation*: Sometimes in a bad sense, for looking on with an eye of Fury and Revenge, and visiting with Judgments and Calamities; in which sense it occurs here, where God Almighty threatens to punish the Offenders against this Law, both in their Persons and Posterity. And,

1. He visits this Iniquity upon the Fathers themselves; of this kind the Holy Scriptures afford many Examples, God Almighty executing his Judgments upon Idolaters, and frequently punishing his own People, when they revolted from him, and set up their molten Images.

2. He visits this Iniquity of the Fathers upon the Children; this we find verified in many of the Kings of Israel and Judah, who for their Idolatry were punish'd not only in their own Persons, but in their Posterity, God recompensing the Iniquity of the Fathers into the Bosom of their Children after them, as we read, Jer. 32. 18. And that,

3. To the third and fourth Generation; those being Generations which a Man may live to see. Now as the Prosperity of Children is one of the greatest Comforts of human Life, and all Parents delight to behold such flourishing Branches of themselves; so to see them in Misery and Trouble is a most doleful and heart-breaking Prospect: And therefore God Almighty to deter Men from the transgressing of this Law, denounces Vengeance against the Posterity of such as break it, threatening their Children to the third and fourth Generation, and punishing their Idolatries through the whole Line that they are capable of seeing; by which it appears, that Sinners entail a Curse upon their Offspring, and make their Childrens Children miserable by their Impietys. But how can it consist with the Justice and Goodness of God to punish the Children

Children for their Parents faults? especially having declar'd, that *the Soul that sinneth, that shall die; the Son shall not bear the Iniquity of the Father, nor the Father the Iniquity of the Son, but the Righteousness of the Righteous shall be upon him, and the Wickedness of the Wicked upon him.* Now to this the Answer is easy and obvious. For,

1. God's visiting the Sins of the Fathers upon the Children is always upon supposition of making their Fathers Sins their own by imitating their Examples, and treading in the steps of their Impieties; for so God himself tells them, *If your Children forsake my Law, and walk not in my Statutes, I will visit their Transgressions with the Rod, and their Sins with Scourges; otherwise, if the Son forsake the Iniquities of his Father, he shall not die, he shall surely live, saith the Lord.*

God never visits the Sins of the Fathers upon penitent and reforming Children; but if they imitate their Fathers Wickedness, 'tis but just and righteous that they suffer for them: in which case, they are punish'd not for their Fathers Sins but their own.

2. Because Idolatrous Parents are too apt to corrupt their Children by their evil Counsel and Example, God Almighty to deter them from it, threatens to punish the Fathers in their Children, which he may as well do, as in their Houses and Estates or any thing that appertains to them: for Children are a part of the Goods and Substance of the Parents, who are deeply concern'd in their Welfare or Misery; and therefore God may justly visit them in those dearest pledges of themselves, if they mislead them into their Impieties; in which case he doth not so much make the Children suffer the Punishment of their Fathers Sin, as the Fathers suffer for their own.

3. God Almighty may and often doth visit the Iniquities of the Fathers upon their Children with temporal Punishments: in which case tho the Calamity be the Child's, yet the Punishment is properly the Father's; he is wonded in one of the nearest and tenderest parts of himself, tho it may work together for good to the repenting Child. Indeed God never visits the Fathers Sins upon the Children with eternal Punishments, in which sense every one must bear his own Burden; but he justly may and doth with temporal Evils, for the Correction and Amendment of both.

But who are the Persons against whom this Threat is denounc'd? Why, that the next words will inform us, in which he is said to visit

visit the Iniquities of the Fathers upon the Children *in them that hate him*; that is, in them that transgress his Laws: for as the loving of God is express'd by *keeping his Commandments*, so the breaking of them is stil'd the *hating of him*. But Idolaters and the Worshippers of Images are more especially call'd haters of God: for as the Adultress shews her hatred and contempt of her Husband, by giving her self to the Embraces of another; so they cast off the Love of God who go a whoring after their own Inventions; and they who give that Worship to Images that is due to God only, may be truly said to hate him.

But there is another branch of the Sanction of this Law, taken from the goodness of God both to the Persons and Posterities of those that *love him and keep his Commandments*, which shall be consider'd in the next.

DISCOURSE VII.

Exod. 20. 4, 5, 6. *Thou shalt not make to thy self any graven Image, nor the likeness of any thing that is in Heaven above, &c. Thou shalt not bow down to them, nor worship them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquities of the Fathers upon the Children, to the third and fourth Generation of them that hate me, and shew Mercy unto thousands in them that love me, and keep my Commandments.*

HAVING spoken of the Negative part of this Precept, which forbids the making and worshipping of Images, I proceed to the Affirmative part of it, or what is requir'd in it: And that is, the worshipping of God in a right way, or after a due manner; which (as appears by what has been said before) is the worshipping of him in any way futable to his Nature and Will.

1st. I say, this Commandment requires us to serve God in a way futable to his Nature; that is, not by Images or corporeal Resemblances, for he having no bodily Parts, is not to be represented in a bodily Shape, which is to debase and bely him: but being a spiritual Substance must be serv'd with a spiritual Worship; for

so our Saviour declares, *John 4. 24. God is a Spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in Spirit and Truth.* For the better clearing whereof we may note,

1. That the worshipping of God in Spirit and Truth doth not exclude all bodily Worship, as we shall see by and by: for this, tho perform'd by the Body, is nevertheless spiritual Worship; for it proceeds from the Spirit of God exciting our Spirits to the performance of it, and is (as one has well observ'd) directed by a spiritual Rule, to a spiritual End, the Glory of God, and our own Salvation.

Nor yet 2. Does the worshipping of God in Spirit exclude all serving of him with Rites and Ceremonies; for God's appointing them under the Law, when he was as much a Spirit, and requir'd to be serv'd in Spirit as well as now, and likewise his enjoining the Rites and Ceremonies of the two Sacraments under the Gospel, shew these not to be inconsistent with spiritual Worship, but rather helps and furtherances of it.

To worship him then in Spirit and Truth, is to worship him with our Spirits, and not with the Tongue only; to draw nigh to him with our Hearts, and not barely with the Lips; and to serve him truly and sincerely, in opposition to all feigned, formal, and hypocritical Service. In short, to serve him suitably to his Nature, is to have our Affections stirring towards him in a way becoming his several Attributes; that is, to love him for his Goodness, to fear him for his Greatness, to trust him for his Faithfulness, and to honor him for all his divine and adorable Perfections.

2dly. To worship God aright, we are to do it not only in a way suitable to his Nature, but likewise agreeable with his Will; that is, we must serve him according to his Direction and Appointment, and no otherwise: for divine Worship being that Homage which we as Creatures owe to our great Creator, 'tis but fit that he himself should have the ordering of it, and that we should do in it as he hath commanded; to do otherwise is to disclaim his Authority, and to be guided only by our own Will, which is the worst sort of Will-worship.

But here it may be ask'd, whether nothing may be done in the Worship of God, but what is expressly commanded by him? To which I answer, by distinguishing between the substantial parts of divine Worship, and the accidental or alterable Circumstances of it. As for the

Substantial part of Religion, consisting of all that is necessary to be believ'd or done in order to Salvation, that requires the exprefs Precept and Revelation of God, without which nothing is to be so esteemed: for God himself is the best Judg both how he should, and how he will be serv'd; and having deliver'd his mind about it in Holy Scripture, we are to make that the Rule and Standard of our Duty; to add to it would be to charge it with Imperfection, and to make a new Religion of our own. But for the

Circumstantial part of divine Worship, such as Time, Place, Gesture and the like; these being not particularly determin'd by God in the Holy Scripture, are in a great measure left to every ones Discretion in their private Worship, and to the Prudence and Authority of Superiors in the publick Service of the Church, whom we are bid to obey in such things for the Lord's sake.

But here Care must be taken,

1. That the Rites and Ceremonies so enjoin'd be futable to those general Rules of Order, Decency and Edification prescrib'd by God himself, and that they be every way fitting and becoming his Service.

2. That they be not too numerous and cumberfom, lest they prove a Clog rather than Convenience to the divine Service.

And Lastly, That they neither be enjoin'd or observ'd as essential parts of Worship, or as things in themselves pleasing unto God and necessary to Salvation; for this is to add to the substance of Religion, and to *teach for Doctrines the Commandments of Men*; but only as outward Circumstances for the Order and Comeliness of publick Worship, and as things that may vary, as Times, and Place, and other occasions may require. And where these Conditions are observ'd, the Service thus enjoin'd and perform'd is agreeable to the Will of God, and is part of the Duty here requir'd in this Commandment.

By which it appears, that the Worship of God here inculcated upon us in this Precept, is partly Internal, and partly External.

The Internal part of it is the Worship of our Hearts and Souls, whereby we inwardly admire and adore his divine Excellencies, esteeming, loving, fearing and trusting him as our great Creator and best Benefactor; and all this not in pretence and appearance only, but in Sincerity and Truth, *not in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth*, from the very bottom of the Heart.

The External part of this Worship, is the Worship of the Body or outward Man, whereby we express the inward Reverence of the Mind, by the outward humble Gestures of the Body, which God frequently calls for, and *David* exhorts to in those words, *O come let us worship and fall down, and kneel before the Lord our Maker.* This some Expositors of this Commandment have thought to be principally intended and requir'd in it, making the former, that is, the internal Worship of the Soul, to be requir'd in the first Commandment; the latter, *viz.* the external Worship of the Body, to be commanded in this: in which as God forbids the bowing down or giving any bodily Worship to graven Images, so he requires the bowing down and other gestures of bodily Adoration to be given to himself. But because these humble Gestures, and all other acts of bodily Reverence have been decry'd and impugn'd by some, and are still but too much neglected by others; 'twill be requisite to add something to recommend and enforce this bodily Worship upon us. To which end we may observe,

1. That as he challenges this external Worship as due to himself, so he threatens to punish all such as give it to any other: he here forbids the bowing or falling down to any graven Image, as an Invasion of his Prerogative, and shews that the prostituting our Bodies as well as Souls to them, will stir up his Jealousy. How sharply are the *Israelites* reprov'd for bowing the knee to *Baal*? And the Idolatry of the Heathens is frequently express'd in Scripture, by their *serving other Gods, and bowing themselves unto them*, Josh. 23. 16. Whereby it appears, that as these visible acts of outward Worship are not to be paid to any false Deities, so are they claim'd, and to be carefully perform'd to the true God.

2. God Almighty created the Body as well as the Soul, and united them together for his Service, and therefore he expects the Homage of both. Indeed the service of the Heart and the Soul is what he principally regards and calls for: *My Son, give me thy Heart*, saith he, that being the best Offering we can make to a spiritual and immaterial Being; without which all other Service is but dead and unsavory: But yet he hath an eye likewise to the Service of the Body, and expects the Humility and Adoration of the outward Man; he calls for the Ear, to hear Instruction; for the Eyes to be lifted up in Prayer; for the Tongue to speak the Praises of our Maker: in a word, he expects that our whole Man should bow with the profoundest Awe and Reverence to him, before he will bow his Ear, or incline to hear us;
and

and justly too, for 'tis he that made us, and not we our selves; 'tis he that fram'd and sustains our Bodies, and therefore all the Members of it are to be employ'd and devoted to his Service.

3. Our Bodies as well as Souls partake of the benefits of Christ's Redemption; and therefore both are to be dedicated to him, and to join together in his Service: *Ye are bought with a Price*, saith the Apostle, which he affirms there of the whole Man, both Body and Soul, which are both the purchase of his Blood, and justified by his Redemption; for which reason he tells us *we are not our own*, to dispose and order our selves as we please, but being *bought with a Price*, *we are to glorify God in our Bodies, and in our Spirits, which are both his*, 1 Cor. 6. last. In the verse immediately preceding, he styles our Bodies the Temples of the Holy Ghost, in which therefore we are to worship our Maker, and being redeem'd and sanctified by his Holy Spirit, ought to be consecrated to his Service.

Lastly, We hope to be glorified hereafter in our Bodies as well as Souls, and therefore both are to glorify God here. Many and great things are declar'd concerning the future Felicity of our Bodies, that they shall be *fashion'd like unto Christ's glorious Body*, being impassible and incorruptible like his, and made for ever Vessels of Honor fitted and prepar'd for our Master's use; and being to be crown'd with such invaluable Blessings hereafter, 'tis but reasonable to fit them for it, by engaging them in his Service here, *presenting our Bodies to him, as a living, holy and acceptable Sacrifice, which is our reasonable Service*.

Thus we see what is requir'd of us in this Commandment; namely to raise our Minds above all gross Sense and Fancy in our Adorations of our Maker, not framing any outward Images or Resemblances to worship him by, as the manner of some is; nor forming any false Notions or Misrepresentations of him within, by thinking him such a one as our selves, and serving him accordingly, as others do, who fondly imagine him delighted only or chiefly with new Phrases, and that he must be daily serv'd with suddenly conceiv'd and varied Prayers: which mistakes proceed from some false Idea's and Misapprehensions of him, which we are here willed to remove.

Moreover, we are here commanded to entertain high and worthy Thoughts of him; conceiving of him as a Being transcendently perfect, infinitely superior to all in Goodness, Justice, Wisdom and Power; and so to be lov'd, fear'd and trusted above

all, and directing all our Service to him with such Apprehensions : which is to *worship him in Spirit and in Truth.*

And this is to be done not only with the inward, but with the outward Man ; that is, the Body as well as the Mind is to be employ'd in these Adorations. The negative Precept here, *Thou shalt not bow down to a graven Image*, includes the contrary positive Duty, *Thou shalt bow down to the Lord thy God* ; meaning that our bodily Worship, as well as that of the Mind, is due and must be paid to him. He that bows, or kneels, or uses any Posture of Reverence to a graven Image, breaks this Commandment by Idolatry : And he that refuses to bow or kneel, or use any reverent Posture in publick Worship unto God, breaks it by Sacrilege ; for God is equally rob'd of his Honour, whether we give it to another, or deny it to himself.

This Commandment then as much requires us to bow down and kneel, and give bodily Worship unto God, as it forbids us to give it to a graven Image : And the Practice of holy Men in all Ages hath been accordingly, who have been equally forward to do the one, as to deny the other. In the Old Testament we find the People of God always using a Posture of Reverence in the Worship of God, by standing, or kneeling, or prostrating themselves ; but we never read of any irreverently sitting at their Devotions. In the New Testament we find our Blessed Saviour and his Disciples in all their Prayers unto God either bowing, kneeling, or prostrating themselves before him ; which is that glorifying God with their Bodies enjoin'd and practis'd by them : And where this is neglected, he reckons himself dishonour'd and despis'd by us.

Indeed the inward Reverence and Devotion of the Mind will evermore draw after it this outward Reverence of the Body : And therefore we find the whole Worship of God represented in Scripture by these external visible Acts of Adoration ; the outward bending and bowing of the Body being both the Signs and Effects of the inward Bending and Submission of the Soul to him. Hence bowing and kneeling unto God is generally in Scripture us'd to signify the worshipping of him, as we may see in *Psal.* 95. 5. *Mic.* 6. 6.

This therefore is here requir'd to be paid unto God and no other : And that first because he is a *jealous God*, that is infinitely tender of this outward as well as inward Honour, and impatient of any Competitor in this incommunicable Homage that belongs to him. Again, He

He threatens to visit the Iniquity of the Fathers upon the Children to the fourth Generation of them that thus invade and defraud him of his Honour; that is, their Posterity shall fare the worse for it, their Childrens Children shall be capable of less Favour, and be more strictly and severely dealt with upon this score; the Justice whereof we before vindicated.

Lastly, To encourage the Observance of this Law, he adds, that he will shew mercy unto thousands of them that love him and keep his Commandments. Not that he will forbear to punish the offending Children of good Men; no, we find him declaring, That if their Children forsake his Law, and keep not his Commandments, he will visit their Transgression with the Rod, and their Sin with Scourges; nevertheless (saith he) my loving Kindness will I not utterly take from them, Psal. 89. 30, &c. that is, he will deal more favourably with them for their Parents sake. The Misdeeds of some shall not interrupt his Kindness to the rest of their Posterity, or blot out the memory of their Goodness. This we find verify'd in the Posterity of Abraham and the other Patriarchs, in whom God Almighty overlook'd many and great Provocations for their sake, mixing Mercy with Severity, and settling them at last in the promis'd Land. Moreover,

We may observe here the vast difference and disproportion between the Proceedings of God in the way of Justice and the way of Mercy: He visiteth the Iniquities of disobedient Parents to the third or fourth Generation; but he sheweth Mercy to a thousand Generations of those that obey him. He soon forgets the Wrongs done to him, but keeps our good Works in everlasting remembrance: which may teach us not only to imitate him herein, but may likewise encourage us to serve and obey so good a Master.

Furthermore, lest any should vainly expect these Instances of Divine Goodness, without observing the Conditions annex'd to them, the last words of the Commandment confine them wholly to those that love God and keep his Commandments: where as the Revolters from God were before stil'd Haters of him, so they that obey his Laws, are here said to love him. He that hath my Commandments and keepeth them (saith our Saviour) he it is that loveth me, John 14. 21, 15. and elsewhere, If any man loveth me, he will keep my Word.

Finally then, to conclude this Commandment, we learn hence the Happiness of descending from good Parents, who bequeath a Blessing, and derive Mercy upon their Offspring to many Generations.

rations: And likewise the sad Misfortune of being born of disobedient Parents, who entail Misery and a Curse upon their whole Posterity; which should teach us, not only for our own, but our Childrens sake, to be ever mindful of keeping God's Laws, and very tender of breaking them.

DISCOURSE VIII.

Exod. 20. 7. *Thou shalt not take the Name of the Lord thy God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his Name in vain.*

HAVING finish'd the Second, I proceed to the Third Commandment contain'd in the words read; in which we may easily observe,

1. A Precept, *Thou shalt not take the Name of the Lord thy God in vain.*

2. A Reason or Commination to enforce it, *For the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his Name in vain.*

The Precept being negative, I must begin with what is forbidden by it, which is, *the taking of God's Name in vain.*

For the fuller explaining whereof, 'twill be necessary to enquire, *First*, What we are to understand here by the *Name of God*; and,

Secondly, What by *taking his Name in vain*. For the

First, A Name, we know, is that by which any thing is made known, and consequently the Name of God must signify all that by which he is made known unto us: And that is done, sometimes

By his Titles, as Jehovah, the Lord, God, and the like. Sometimes

By his Attributes and Properties, as Eternity, Immensity, Immutability, and the like. These we find frequently in Scripture call'd the Name of God; and when he proclaim'd his Name himself, he did it by these and other Attributes, stiling himself, *The Lord, the Lord God, Gracious and Merciful, Long-suffering, abundant in Goodness and Truth*, Exod. 34. 5, 6. And elsewhere he is call'd, *the Holy One of Israel, the Lord of Hosts, the Great and the Just one*, and the like. Moreover, sometimes the Word and
Worship

Worship of God is call'd his Name; *I will declare thy Name unto my Brethren*, Psal. 22. 22. that is, I will publish thy Word, and make known thy Worship. *I have manifested thy Name unto the Men that thou gavest me*, John 17. 6. that is, I have instructed them in the true Religion, and taught them the Worship of God, which they that observe and walk in, are said to walk in the Name of the Lord, Micah 4. 5.

Lastly, God is sometimes known by his Works, and therefore these may be compris'd under his Name; *The Lord is known by the Judgments which he executeth*: and his Works declare both his Power, Wisdom, and Goodness. But tho we are never to speak slightly or dishonorably either of the Word or Works of God, yet by his Name here we are chiefly to understand his Attributes and Titles, as best representing the Nature and Being of God; it being a usual Figure to put the Name for the Thing or Person express'd by it.

But what is it to take this Name of God in vain? Why this in general forbids all irreverent Use, or Abuse rather, of God's holy Name, in any matters, or upon any occasion whatever. More particularly it condemns,

1. All rash and inconsiderate Use of God's Name upon slight and trivial occasions; saying in common Speech (as too many do) O Lord, O God, upon any light matter; and crying out, Good Lord! or Good God! upon every piece of News they hear, without considering the Truth of the Fact, or the Greatness of the Majesty they invoke. 'Tis ordinary with some Persons to exclaim, O Jesu! and O Christ! upon any strange Report or seeming Wonderment that happens; this is a great fault proceeding from Carelessness, or an habitual Irreverence, whereby God is highly dishonour'd, and his Sacred Name unworthily prostituted and profan'd. *Holy and Reverend is his Name*, saith the Psalmist; and elsewhere, *His Name is wonderful and Holy*; and therefore may not be mention'd or us'd irreverently.

2. The uttering of rash, hasty, and indecent Expressions to and of God in Prayer, is the taking his Name in vain. Of this kind are those sudden *extempore* Effusions, which too many venture to pour out in their Addresses unto God, in which they often cry out, O Lord, and O God, when they are at a loss what to say or ask of him. This was the fault of the Heathens of old, and of the Pharisees in our Saviour's time, who thought to be heard

for their long Prayers and much Speaking ; to prevent which he prescrib'd a Form of Prayer to his Disciples, which, with other decent Forms compos'd by it, hath been observ'd by the Church ever since, that we may serve God acceptably with Reverence and godly Fear, and not rudely take his Name in vain in our Approaches to him.

3. To use the Name of God in rash Swearing, Cursing, and other Imprecations, is to take his Name in vain. This is what our Saviour forbids when he saith, *Swear not at all*, Mat. 5. 34. and St. James, *Above all things, my Brethren, swear not*, James 5. 12. Not that all Swearing is to be thought unlawful ; for we are commanded to *fear the Lord, and swear by his Name*, Deut. 6. 13. Swearing in Scripture is an Act of Religion, that is to be perform'd unto God as an Acknowledgment of his Attributes and Perfections : we thereby own him to be the Searcher of Hearts, the Judg of Truth, and the Avenger of Falshood : so that the Act of Swearing in its own nature is so far from taking of God's Name in vain, that it implies a high Reverence and Estimation of him. Beside, an Oath is appointed to be *the end of all Strife*, and hath been us'd in all Times and Ages to that end ; which is enough to evince not only the Lawfulness, but the Usefulness and Necessity of it.

What then is the Swearing forbidden here, and condemn'd by Christ and his Apostles ? Why,

1. Both our Saviour and St. James condemn all Swearing by any Creature ; for so they both explain themselves : *Swear not at all, either by Heaven, for it's God's Throne, nor by Earth, for it is his Footstool ; neither by Jerusalem, for it is the City of the great King ; neither shalt thou swear by thy Head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black*, Mat. 5. 35, 36. Swearing is a part of that Worship and Honour which is peculiar unto God, who hath requir'd us to *swear only by his Name* ; and therefore we find the Israelites blam'd for *swearing by them that were no Gods*, Jer. 5. 7. This is to give that Honour to Creatures which is due to God only : *For Men verily swear by the greater* (saith the Apostle) and to swear by any other thing, is to make them greater than God, which is the greatest Indignity can be offer'd to him. This Practicewas too rife among the Gentiles in our Saviour's time ; for they swore by the Sun, Moon and Stars, by Fowl, Serpents, and any other thing that was next at hand. To check which Idolatry, our Saviour gave this strict Precept, of swearing not at all by Heaven,

Heaven, Earth, or any Creature therein : and likewise to remove the false Gloss of the Pharisees, who taught that if they did not forswear themselves, they might swear by the Temple, the Altar, and other things ; which our Saviour condemns as a high Derogation from the Honour of God, and as giving his Glory to another.

2. Both our Saviour and St. *James* condemn all rash and idle Swearing in common Discourse ; for both of them add, *Let your Communication be Yea, Yea, Nay, Nay, lest ye fall into Condemnation ; for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil.* By which 'tis evident, that all Swearing is forbidden in our ordinary Talk and Discourses with one another ; in which we are not to go higher than Affirmation and Negation, without using any Imprecation, or calling in God to witness upon trivial and slight occasions ; for this destroys all that Reverence and awful Fear we are to have of God, and prostitutes his Sacred Name to vile and idle purposes. And yet this is but too common a Practice among many that call themselves Christians, tho they are the Blemish and Scandal of that Name, and blaspheme that as they do the Name of God. Alas ! what Volleys of Oaths proceed out of the mouths of some loose profane Wretches, enough to poison the Air that gives them breath, and to grate upon the ears of all that hear them ? How frequent is it with such to back and adorn (as they think) their idle Talk with the venerable Name and Authority of God ; and to call in the Divine Majesty to witness such trifling and absurd things, as a wise Man would not venture to speak, nor a good Man desire to hear ? Yea, how common is it with these Men to call upon God to damn and sink them, as if they thought Divine Vengeance were asleep, and their Damnation slumber'd.

This is a gross Abuse and Profanation of the Holy Name of God, and a taking it in vain to their own Destruction ; which vile Practice is so much the worse, because it hath nothing to justify or recommend it : 'Tis a Sin that is void of all Temptation, and admits of no Apology or Excuse : All other Sins have something or other to invite the Sinner to the commission of 'em ; the covetous Man hath the Allurement of Profit ; the voluptuous Man hath the Bait of Pleasure ; the ambitious Man the Temptation of Honour ; but the idle profane Swearer serves the Devil for nought, and barter away his Soul without any consideration.

All that is alledg'd for it is, That 'tis become a genteel and fashionable Practice; and to lard our Discourse now and then with an Oath renders it the more full and blustering.

But are we not forbid to fashion our selves according to the course of this World, or to follow the sinful and corrupt Practices of it? Will it be any Excuse at the last Day for taking God's Name in vain, to say it was the fashion to do so? Nay, will it not aggravate our Condemnation, to comply with those wicked Customs, which we should discountenance and condemn? Will any reckon it genteel to affront their Maker? or think their Language the more lofty and great for being directed against Heaven? Is Profaneness to be thought an Ornament of Speech? or is the abusing of God's Name the way of advancing our own? Certainly they that think so pervert the end of Speech, and make the Tongue, which is the *Glory of a Man*, to prove his shame and ruin: For *God shall root out the Evil-doers, and the Tongue that speaketh proud things*. I have insisted the more on this vain and idle Swearing, not only because 'tis prohibited in this Precept, but because 'tis too much gotten into the Practice of some men.

3. All using the Name of God in false Swearing, is the *taking his Name in vain*. This is suppos'd to be the Sin principally prohibited in this Commandment, viz. The calling in of God to witness a Falshood: for the word here render'd *in vain*, in the Original signifies a *Lye*, and so tis us'd in that parallel place where this Law is repeated, *Ye shall not swear by my Name falsely*, Lev. 19. 12. And this is done either by affirming something which we know to be false, or by promising something which we mean not to perform. The former is call'd an Assertory, the latter a Promissory Oath. In the first sense we take God's Name in vain, when we assert such or such a thing was done or said by such a Person, at such a time or place, and confirm it with an Oath, when we know of no such thing to be said or done by him; this is downright Perjury or Forswearing, and is too often found in Shops and Courts of Justice, where too many things are affirm'd to be true, which they know to be false: which is a high Affront offer'd unto God, to father Falshood upon him, who is Truth it self, and to make God to vouch and attest the Lies and Suggestions of the Devil. Again,

If a Man swear to a thing of which he is only doubtful, he is guilty of Perjury, tho' the thing he swore to should afterward prove true; for such a one swears at random, and calls in God
to

to witness a thing, which, for ought he knows, may be as well false as true: whereas an Oath is to be taken in Judgment, and we are never to swear to any thing which we do not certainly know. We make too bold with God Almighty, and *take his Name in vain*, when we bring him in as a Witness to a thing, of the Truth of which we are not fully assur'd.

Then for that other sort of Oaths wherein we promise something, Perjury may be committed, and the Name of God profan'd two ways.

1. When we promise a thing upon Oath, and at the time of Swearing have no purpose of performing it: this is both a mocking of God, and dealing deceitfully with Men; and is not only a dallying with, but a defying the Divine Majesty. *I have sworn (saith David) and am utterly purpos'd that my mouth shall not offend: whereas these say in their hearts, I have sworn, and am fully purpos'd to falsify with God and Man*, which is a gross Abuse and Indignity offer'd to both: and therefore *David* makes it the Character of one that is to *ascend the holy Hill*, that *he hath not lift up his Heart unto Vanity, nor sworn to deceive his Neighbour*, Psal. 24. 4.

2. Perjury is committed, when tho at the time of promising we mean to perform, yet finding some Loss or Inconvenience after, we alter our mind, and refuse to do according to what is gone out of our mouth: this is to play with Oaths, and profane the Name of God. 'Tis the Character of a good Man, that he *swareth to his Neighbour, and disappointeth him not, tho it prove to his own hindrance*, Psal. 15. 5. And we read, that when *Joshua* and the *Israelites* had made a League, and sworn to the *Gibeonites*, tho it were extorted by Craft, and prov'd to their great prejudice, yet they would not break their Oath, *Josh. 9*. The Name of God is too Sacred to be taken in vain; and where the matter of an Oath is lawful and possible, nothing can discharge or dispense with its Obligation. To do or think otherwise, is to dishonour God, to deceive our Neighbour, and to dissolve the Bond of human Society. But beside these, there is

Another way of *taking God's Name in vain*; and that is, by making rash Vows, and falsifying in good ones. A Vow being made unto God as the Party, is sacred and inviolable. We are bid to vow unto the Lord things worthy of him, and then to be careful of paying them: so that to vow to him in trivial matters, and to disregard them in greater, is to slight our Maker, and to take his Name in vain. In short then, all vain and rash
Speeches,

Speeches, all idle Swearing, all Perjury or Forswearing, all Falshood or Rashness in Vows, are forbidden in this Commandment. To caution against which, here is added

A severe Commination, in those words, *For the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his Name in vain.* To hold any guiltless, is to free him from Blame and Punishment; and consequently not to hold him guiltless, is to free him from neither: yea, there is a *Meiosis* in the words, in which more is signify'd than seems to be express'd; and not to hold him guiltless, is to reckon him highly guilty, and worthy of the greatest Punishment: so that the Expression implies two things.

1. That God will surely punish all such as *take his Name in vain.*
2. That he will punish them with Rigor and Severity.

Now this Threatning is added to this Commandment, to awaken Men to a Sense of the Evil and Danger of breaking it; for tho no Sin be more provoking to God than profaning his Name, yet none is more frequently committed or less punish'd among Men. 'Tis usual for many who cannot bear the least Abuse offer'd to their own Name, patiently to hear the Name of God blasphem'd: yea, many times those that should punish this Sin in others, give the worst Examples of it themselves, larding their Discourses with Oaths and Curses, and shewing little or no Reverence for the great and terrible Name of God. For which reason God Almighty declares here his different Sense and Sentiments in this matter, letting us know that he will visit for these things himself, and will not hold them guiltless, whom we are apt to charge with little or no guilt at all.

Now that *the Lord will not hold them guiltless that thus take his Name in vain*, is evident from the many and sore Judgments executed on such as have been guilty of it. We read that the Son of the *Israelitish* Woman, who had curs'd and blasphem'd the Name of the Lord, was by God's command brought out of the Camp, and ston'd in the sight of all that heard him, *Lev. 24. 11, 12, 13.* *Pharaoh* for his insolent saying, *Who is the Lord?* was plagu'd with sundry kinds of Judgments, and is set forth as a Monument of divine Justice. *Senacherib* for blaspheming the Name of the living God, had his Army smote by an Angel, and was himself deliver'd up to his own Sons to be slain, *2 Kings 19. 35.* Many other Histories will inform us of the heavy Judgments that have befallen common Swearers and Profaneers of God's holy Name.

Which

Which should teach us to beware of all Irreverence towards the Sacred Name and Authority of God.

Thus we see what is forbidden in this Third Commandment; and likewise what great reason there is to avoid it.

DISCOURSE IX.

Exod. 20. 7. *Thou shalt not take the Name of the Lord thy God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his Name in vain.*

THIS Precept being negative, I treated in my last of what was forbidden by it, which was all irreverent and profane Use of the Sacred Name of God. But because every Negative includes and infers the Affirmative, I must proceed to the Affirmative part, or the Duties requir'd by it; and that is, in all cases and upon all occasions to use the Name of God reverently and becomingly. So that as the two first Commandments settled the Object and Manner of Divine Worship, this secures the Honor and Reverence that is due to the Name of God.

By the Name of God (as was before observ'd) we understand all that by which he makes himself known to us; and likewise all those things that more especially relate and appertain to him.

Of the first sort are his Titles, Attributes, Word and Works; all which discovering God to us, and distinguishing him from all others, are in Scripture stil'd his Name.

Of the second sort are his Ministers, his Sabbath, his Sanctuary, and the like; all which tending to make God known to us, are intitled to him, and call'd by his Name. All these are to be reverently us'd and honour'd by us, as bearing the Name of God, and being nearly related and devoted to him.

But how is this Name of God to be reverenc'd by us? Why, not only by the inward Reverence and Esteem of the Mind, but likewise by the outward Reverence of our Words and Actions; that is, as we are to entertain great and high Thoughts of him in our Hearts, so must all our Words and Speeches of him be reverent, and such as become his infinite Greatness. His Name is Great, Wonderful, and Holy, and therefore must not be mention'd.

tion'd without the Honour and Respect due to it. 'Tis, we know, against good Manners, to mention the Name of a King, or any above us, without some token of Respect; but the Name of God is above every Name, and therefore ought in reason to be had in the highest Estimation and Reverence. And this is to extend to all that is denominated by him, or belongs to him. As,

1. His Titles are to be us'd and spoken of with all Reverence; *Holy and Reverend is his Name* (saith the Psalmist) and therefore to be us'd with all due and decent Regard. In *Deut. 28. 58.* we are commanded to *fear this glorious and fearful Name of the Lord our God.* We find God Almighty often declaring his Name, and mentioning his Titles, on purpose to strike our Minds with the greater Awe and Reverence of him. Hence the Jews had the Names of *Jah* and *Jehovah* in so high esteem and veneration, that they would scarce venture to pronounce them, for fear of profaning them: And shall we presume to use the sacred Names of *Lord* and *God* upon light and vain, not to say vile and sinful occasions?

2. We are to think and speak honourably of the Attributes of God; for these are in Scripture comprehended under his Name, and are therefore never to be mention'd without Honour. Of these some are peculiar to the Divine Nature, as Omnipotence, Omniscience, Omnipresence, and the like: Others are deriv'd down, and in some inferior degrees communicated to his Creatures, as Holiness, Wisdom, Justice, and Goodness; all which being Rays of the Divinity, and the essential Excellencies of the Supreme Being, are to be honourably esteem'd and mention'd by us.

3. We are to speak and think honourably of the Word of God. This is in Scripture often call'd by his Name; *I have declar'd thy Name*, that is thy Word, *unto the Heathen*, *John 17. 26.* And the Psalmist tells us, that God hath *magnify'd his Word above all his Name.* Indeed we cannot better shew our Reverence unto God, than by honouring his Word. He that truly honours any Person, will mightily regard what he says; every word of one we value will be of weight with us: and consequently if we bear that Reverence we ought unto God, we shall have a wonderful Respect for his Word, we shall delight to hear, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest it, relishing a Sweetness in it beyond that of *the Honey and the Honey-comb*, *Psal. 19. 10.* We shall not only
speak

Speak of it with respect, but make it the Guide of our Lives, and the Rule of all our Actions. How well this is observ'd by such as speak slightly of the Holy Scriptures, and make them too often the Subject of their Contempt and Drollery, some Men may do well to consider.

4. We are to speak and think honourably of the Works of God; these too bear his Name, and declare him to us: *The Heavens* (saith the Psalmist) *declare the Glory of God, and the Firmament sheweth his handy Work.* God Almighty distinguishes himself from the Heathen Gods, not only by his Word, in which he *shews things to come*; but chiefly by his Works, in which his infinite Power, Wisdom and Goodness manifestly appear. *The invisible things of God* (saith the Apostle) *from the Creation of the World are clearly seen, even his eternal Power and Godhead*; for which reason he is, by way of Eminence, stil'd, *The living God, that made Heaven and Earth.* Now his Works being great, wonderful and holy, are to be had in reverence by us; we are highly to value and esteem them, and never to mention them without Honour: *The Works of the Lord are great* (saith the Psalmist) *sought out of all that have Pleasure therein.* Accordingly we find him often magnifying and meditating upon his Works, and frequently extolling the Operations of his hands; and in so doing, we are said to *render unto him the Honour due to his Name.*

But beside these distinguishing Titles and Attributes belonging to the Divine Majesty, there are other things dedicated to him, and thereby denominated by him, which for that reason require our Respect and Veneration; such are sacred Persons, Times and Places, with some other things, which for the Relation they have to God, as bearing his Name, and belonging to him, are to be honour'd by us. As,

1. The Ministers of God are to be had in Honour and Reverence, being call'd by his Name, and constituted by his Authority: Hence the Apostle wills to *mark them that are over us in the Lord and admonish us, and to esteem them highly in Love both for their Work and their Master's sake,* 1 Thess. 5. 13. In another place he wills us to *account of them as the Ministers of Christ, and Stewards of the Mysterys of God,* and for that reason to be *worthy of double Honour.* The relation they bear to God as his Ambassadors calls for our Respect and Veneration; for Ambassadors, by the Laws of all Nations, are to be us'd with a Respect answerable to the

Quality of him that sends them: and therefore our Saviour told his Apostles, that *they that despis'd them, despis'd him; and they that despis'd him, despis'd him that sent him*, Luke 10. 16. So that the contemning of Ministers, is the contemning of Christ and God too, and is a matter worthy the consideration of the Scoffers and Sectarys of our days.

2. The Lord's Day is to be reverenc'd and regarded by us, for the Title and Relation it has to him, for he hath set it apart for himself, and stil'd it his: *The seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God*; and therefore he hath requir'd us to *sanctify his Sabbath*, which is call'd by his Name, and in which he hath willed us to call upon it. But this will fall more properly under the next Commandment, to which therefore I refer it.

3. The Lord's House, or the Places set apart for his Worship and Service, is to be honour'd and regarded for his sake: This is the Place where his Honour dwells, which he hath call'd by his own Name, and where he vouchsafes his more especial Presence; and therefore must be kept from common Uses, and be look'd upon and us'd as Holy unto the Lord. This he hath requir'd of us, *Ye shall reverence my Sanctuary*: Hence we find our Saviour whipping the Buyers and Sellers out of the Temple, and saying, *My House is call'd the House of Prayer*; and elsewhere, *Make not my Father's House a House of Merchandise*, John 2. 16. signifying, that the Honour we owe to God requires us to reverence his House, which having his Name, and being devoted to his Service, ought to be esteem'd holy, and to be set apart from all common Uses. This is fit to be consider'd by such as make no difference between a Church and a Stable, and many times prefer a Barn or Malt-house before the House of God.

But beside these, there are some Possessions which God Almighty hath more peculiarly call'd his, and that come under his Name, and they are Tithes and Offerings; which are so far to be regarded and esteem'd sacred, as not to be withheld or alienated to common Uses. He who is the great Landlord and Proprietor of the World, hath reserv'd this part of our Substance as a high Rent and Acknowledgment to himself, which he hath made payable to his Ministers who attend his Service and serve at his Altar; and to detain it from them either in whole or in part, is the Sin of Sacrilege. Hence we find God Almighty declaring, that we *rob him by falsifying in Tithes and Offerings*, Mal. 3. 8. And if to rob Men be so great a Crime as to deserve Death, sure

sure to rob God must carry a greater Guilt, and draw after it eternal Damnation; and therefore the sacrilegious Invaders of these Rights are, in the next Verse, said to be *curs'd with a Curse*. What they thus impiously detain, proves a Curse and a Canker to the rest of their Substance; and where 'tis generally practis'd, brings Calamity and a Curse upon a whole Country. In short then, we are to honour the Name of God, by bearing a reverent regard to all things that appertain to him, or are denominated by him.

And this is to be express'd not only by our Words and Speeches, but chiefly by the whole course of our Lives and Actions: there is a Language of our Works as well as Words; and as the Name of God is blasphem'd by our evil Deeds, so is it said to be glorify'd by our good Works. Now this Commandment ties up not only our Tongue from all profane and irreverent Speeches of God, or any thing that belongs to him; but likewise our Hearts from thinking, and our Hands from acting any Evil: It wills us so to order our Words and Actions, that both may tend to and promote the Honour of God, that his Name may be glorify'd by us, never *taking it in vain* by any rash, idle, or false Swearing. And when we use it to any good purpose, as in an Oath, by calling in God as a Witness; or in a Vow, by engaging to him as a Party; we take care that the matter be such as may deserve it, and likewise make conscience duly to observe and perform it. Thus we see what is meant by the Name of God, what by Honouring it, and how this may be best done.

It remains then that we endeavour in all these ways to honour and glorify the Name of God, using all his Titles and Attributes with due Reverence and Regard, never mentioning the Name of God but upon weighty matters and solemn occasions, nor then without an awful fear and sense of him upon our Mind. More particularly,

Let us learn from this Commandment to speak always reverently and becomingly of God's Word, and of all the Mysteries of Religion; not trifling or jesting with divine and sacred things, but making them the Subject of our most serious Thoughts and Meditations. *His Word (saith Moses) shall be in thy Heart, and thou shalt always rehearse it with Fear and Reverence, Deut. 6. 5, 6, 7, &c.*

Next let us at all times make honourable mention of the Works of God, both of Creation and Providence, which are in

Scripture call'd by and comprehended under his Name. *Moses* often commanded the *Israelites* to magnify and extol the Works of the Lord, and to give him the Glory due to his Name. *David* frequently calls upon us to praise the Lord for his Goodness, and declare the wonderful things he hath done for the Children of Men: For himself he could not think of them without crying out, O Lord, how excellent is thy Name in all the World!

Moreover, let us learn from hence to have a due regard to those Persons, Times and Places that are consecrated unto God, and call'd by his Name, honouring his Ministers, hallowing his Sabbath, and reverencing his Sanctuary.

Lastly, let us take heed of withholding or alienating that sacred part of our Substance, I mean the Tenth, which God Almighty hath reserv'd and appropriated to his Service: This he claims as his due, and hath consecrated to the use of the Altar, and cannot be detain'd or alienated without the danger and guilt of Sacrilege. We read what befel *Ananias* and *Sapphira* for withholding part of the Price of their consecrated Substance, both of them being smitten to Death by a sudden stroke from Heaven, *Acts* 5. 1, 2, &c. Neither will he hold them guiltless who rob him in Tithes and Offerings; which being made his by the Laws both of God and Man, to withhold them either in whole or in part, is neither to render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, nor unto God the things that are God's. To conclude,

Among other ways of honouring God, we are commanded to honour him with our Substance; which we cannot better do, than by being true to him in that part of it which he hath reserv'd for the Honour of his Name.

Thus having shew'd both what is forbidden, and what requir'd in this Commandment; it remains, that in the whole course of our Lives we avoid the one, and observe the other.

DISCOURSE

DISCOURSE X.

Exod. 20. 8, 9, 10, 11. *Remember the Sabbath-day to keep it Holy : Six Days shalt thou labour, and do all thy Work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God : In it thou shalt do no manner of Work, thou, nor thy Son, nor thy Daughter, thy Man-servant, nor thy Maid-servant, nor thy Cattel, nor the Stranger that is within thy Gates ; for in six Days the Lord made Heaven and Earth, the Sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh Day : wherefore the Lord blessed the seventh Day, and hallow'd it.*

THESE Words contain the Fourth and last Commandment of the first Table, which more immediately concern the Duty we owe to God. The three foregoing Precepts direct to the Object and Manner of Divine Worship, together with the Honour due to the Name of God, and all things relating to or compris'd under it : This acquaints us with that portion of time which is to be set apart and devoted to his more solemn Service, which we are here told is the Seventh Day.

That Some part of time is to be allotted to the Worship of our Maker, who is the Author and Giver of all time, is a moral Duty, dictated by the natural reason of Mankind ; but What part, or How much of our time is to be set apart for this purpose, depends upon the positive determination of the Divine Will. Now God Almighty in this Law has settled the proportion, and will'd us to devote the Seventh part of our time to his Service ; *Remember that thou keep holy the Sabbath-day, &c.*

This Commandment being partly Affirmative, and partly Negative, I shall consider first what is requir'd, and next what is forbidden in it ; and likewise being partly Moral, and partly Positive, 'twill be requisite to distinguish and consider both. To which end we must observe in it,

First, A Precept, Remember to keep holy the Sabbath-day.

Secondly, An Encouragement to it, partly from the liberal Allowance granted for our own Business, Six Days shalt thou labour, and do all that thou hast to do ; and partly from the Propriety

priety that God challenges in the seventh Day, *But the Seventh Day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God.*

Thirdly, The manner of sanctifying and keeping holy this day, and that is partly by resting from all bodily Labour, *In it thou shalt do no manner of Work, &c.* and partly by employing it in the holy Exercises of Religion: both which are inforc'd by the Example of God himself, *For in six Days the Lord made Heaven and Earth, and rested on the Seventh*; and likewise from his own Dedication of this Day to holy Purposes, *Wherefore the Lord blessed the seventh Day, and hallow'd it.* These are the several Parts or Branches of this Commandment, which must be therefore particularly handled. And,

First, I must begin with the Precept, which is *to keep holy the Sabbath-day*: Where by *keeping holy* we are not to understand any intrinsic or inherent Holiness, as if one Day were in it self more holy than another; but a relative Holiness, consisting in a Separation from common and ordinary, to divine and sacred Uses. For as some *Places* are said to be *Holy unto the Lord*, by being set apart and consecrated to his Service; so are some *Times* for the same reason stil'd *Holy*, by being apply'd and appropriated to holy Uses.

But why is there a *Memento* prefix'd to this above all the other Commandments? for whereas all the rest are deliver'd in plain Precepts, *Thou shalt do or not do this or that*, this is usher'd in with a *Memorandum* or Note of Attention, *Remember that thou keep holy the Sabbath-day*; and is likewise back'd with more Reasons and Inducements to its Observation than all the rest. Why, of this a double account may be given: as,

1. This might proceed from Mens proneness to forget, and backwardness to observe this Law, which might move the Almighty to add this *Memorandum* to keep it in remembrance. The World is so apt to insinuate, and take such firm hold of the Minds of Men, as to engross all their Time and Thoughts, and to drown the remembrance of divine things; and were it not for the return of this Seventh day, to call off their Minds from the Cares and Pleasures of this Life to attend higher and better things, they would fall into an utter forgetfulness of God, and drown themselves in Destruction and Perdition: To prevent which this *Memento* was here given, *Remember the Sabbath-day to keep it holy.*

Moreover,

Moreover, 2. this was added, because Nature and Reason of it self not directing to any particular day for publick Worship, 'twas but needful we should be call'd upon to remember and keep in mind the Day appointed by God himself for that purpose. 'Twas a Father's Observation, that the Sabbath is a Precept not made known to us by our own Consciences, as the other Precepts are; and therefore God gave Reasons and Remembrances for this, which were not needful for many others. Beside,

The Sabbath being a Memorial and Covenant between God and the Jews, to whom this Law was first given, it was requisite to prefix this Note of Attention, to keep them always mindful of it, and careful to observe it.

But, *Secondly*, What Reason or Encouragement is there for the observing of this Day? Why, great fundry ways: as,

1. From that liberal allowance of time which God hath given us for our own Business, in those words, *Six days shalt thou labour, and do all that thou hast to do.* He who is the Master of all time, hath given us a liberal share, and reserv'd to himself a very scanty proportion, but One day in seven; and Gratitude, as well as Equity, should make us willingly return him that. Had he taken all or the greatest part of our time to himself, he had done us no wrong; yea it had been kindness still to allow any: for being all his, he might do with his own what he pleases, and none may say, *what dost thou?* Whereas he has given us the largest share of what was all his, and allow'd us six times more than he takes to himself; sure none can complain of God as a hard Master, who exacts no unreasonable Tasks from us, but only wills us to do our own Business: nor does he abridg us in time, but affords six days in seven for the dispatch of it; and it must be very ungrateful, as well as unjust, to deny him that; especially considering,

2. The peculiar Right and Property which God Almighty challenges in this Day, *But the Seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God.* Indeed every Day may be said to be his, he being the Author of all time, and the number and measure of our days being all in his hand; but he lays a more particular Claim to the Seventh part of it, which he hath set apart and reserv'd for his Service. He hath given us the disposal of all the rest, to be imploy'd as we think fit on all lawful and necessary occasions: *but the Seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God*; this he hath consecrated to his own Lot, and set apart for himself. But,

But, *Thirdly*, how is this Day to be kept holy unto the Lord? Why, chiefly these two ways.

1. By resting in it from all bodily Labours. And,
2. By spending it in holy and religious Exercises.

1. I say, the Commandment requires it to be kept as a day of Rest, and that not barely from the Works of Sin, which we are to abstain from every day; but likewise from the common and ordinary Works of our Calling, which may be well enough done at other times: *In it thou shalt do no manner of Work, thou nor thy Son, &c.* that is, they were to rest from all bodily Labour of any kind, the better to attend the Service of their Maker. And this Rest was to extend not only to Parents and Masters of Familys, but to all their Children and Servants both Male and Female, yea to the very Cattel and Beasts of the Field, who were to partake of this Rest, and to find Ease and Relief on that day from all painful Drudgeries; beside which, it was to reach to the Stranger within their Gates, that is, to those of another Country or Religion that were admitted within the Gates of their House, or resided in their Familys, who were likewise to receive the Benefit of this Rest, and to be exempted from all kind of Labour.

Now this Rest was made so strict to the Jews, that they were to abstain not only from all hard Labour, but from all the ordinary Work and Business of a Family; for they were forbidden to kindle a Fire, or dress their ordinary Provisions on that day: for so we read, *Exod. 35. 2, 3.* where *Moses* commands the Sabbath to be kept as a day of Rest unto the Lord, and whosoever doth any Work therein, even to the kindling a Fire in their Habitations, should be put to Death. Yea they were so far to rest from bodily Labour, that they were not to move from their own place: *Exod. 16. 29.* *Abide ye every Man in his own place, let no Man go out of his place on the seventh day;* not that they were restrain'd from the solemn Assemblies, where the Law was read and expounded to them, but from all unnecessary Walks and Journys, and likewise from going abroad to seek Provisions; for they were forbidden to gather Manna on that day, as we read, *ver. 27, 28.* and we find one for gathering Sticks on the Sabbath-day put to Death by God's own Order, *Numb. 15. 32, 33, 35.* In short, they were restrain'd not only from all servile Work, but from doing their own Pleasure, thinking their own Thoughts, or speaking their own Words, *Isa. 58. 1.*

But

But our blessed Saviour, who added to the strictness of some other Laws, hath relax'd the Severity of this: Being Lord of the Sabbath, he made a double Alteration in it; the one respecting the time, the other the manner of keeping it. The Jewish Sabbath, which was on the Last day of the Week, and kept in memory of the Creation, is now chang'd to the First, in memory of Christ's Resurrection, stil'd therefore the *Lord's Day*. Again, the Jewish Sabbath is by the Apostle stil'd, *A shadow of things to come, but the Body is Christ*, Col. 2. 16, 17. That strict Rest enjoyn'd in it under the Law, represented a more spiritual Rest from Sin under the Gospel, and likewise that eternal Rest that remains for the People of God: Both which being compleated in Christ, who is the end of the Law for Righteousness, the former Shadows vanish'd and yielded to him as the Substance. Hence we find him allowing of many Works of Mercy and Charity on that day, which the rigour of the Law would not dispense with. When the *Pharisees* and others blam'd the Disciples for plucking a few Ears of Corn, and healing the Sick on the Sabbath-day; our Saviour tells them, that *the Sabbath was made for Man, not Man for the Sabbath*; and that it was lawful to heal and do all good Offices on that day both to Man and Beast.

But still we are to make the Lord's-day a day of Rest, and to forbear all the Work and Business of our Calling: not that these things are evil, but good in themselves; nor is this Cessation from Labour acceptable in it self, or any part of Divine Worship: but because earthly Employments are a distraction and hindrance to the more heavenly Dutys of that day, God Almighty hath will'd us to abstain from them, and hath taken us off from our own Work on that day, that we may the better attend on his.

2. We are to keep this Day holy, by devoting it to pious and religious Exercises, and by performing on it all the Acts of Piety and Devotion; for tho we are permitted and requir'd to rest from our Labours on this day, yet we are not to make it a day of Idleness and Looseness, but to imploy it in the religious Acts of Hearing, Praying, Reading of God's Word, and Receiving the Holy Sacraments. This we find was the Practice of the first Christians, who continu'd stedfast on that day in the Apostles Doctrine and Fellowship, in breaking of Bread and in Prayers, Acts 2. 42. And we read of St. John's being in the Spirit on the Lord's Day, Rev. 1. 10. meaning, that he was wholly imploy'd in the spiritual Ex-

ercises of Devotion and Piety ; which things are to be done, not only publickly in the Congregation, but privately in the Family, and secretly in the Closet, this Day being to be set apart for Holy Uses.

Moreover, we are to employ some part of this time in pious and heavenly Meditation, particularly on the wonderful Works of Creation, Providence, and Redemption. We are to sanctify this Day by Acts of Mercy and Charity, such as relieving the Poor, visiting Sick and the like ; which as they are never unseasonable, so are they more especially the proper Work of this Day : Hence we find in the Primitive Times, the Collections for the Saints were generally on this Day, the Apostle exhorting, *On the first Day of the Week let every one lay by him in store, as God has prosper'd him,* 1 Cor. 16. 1, 2. And both our Saviour's Command and Example have warranted and recommended the doing all the good we can on that Day both to Man and Beast.

Briefly then, the Moral part of this Commandment requires some portion of Time to be dedicated to the Service of our Maker, the Author and Bestower of all.

The Positive part of it hath assign'd the seventh part, and requires that proportion of Time to be set apart for this purpose ; which time is to be kept holy, by resting on it from all our worldly Business, and imploying it on the more weighty Affairs of Heaven and Happiness.

To the doing hereof is added a double Inforcement ; one taken from the Example of God Almighty, who wrought six Days, and rested the Seventh, *For in six Days, &c.* the other from the Divine designation and dedication of it to holy Purposes ; *Wherefore the Lord blessed the seventh Day, and hallowed it.* Of each of which a word. And,

First, God Almighty presses the observation of this Law from his own Example ; *For in six Days the Lord made Heaven and Earth, the Sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh Day.* He could as well have made all those things in six Minutes, yea in one single Moment, as in six Days ; but he took this time for effecting of it, to teach us Diligence and Deliberation in all our Affairs : and then *rested the seventh Day* ; not that he was weary with working, or needed any Rest to refresh him, but merely to give us an Example of ceasing on that Day from our worldly, and minding more heavenly Affairs. Now since God himself hath condescended so low, as to work six Days and rest the Seventh, merely

merely to give us an Example and Incouragement to do the same ; what better Direction, or nobler Pattern can we wish to follow in this Matter ? especially considering

Next, that God Almighty has particularly appointed and consecrated this Portion of Time to his Service ; *Wherefore the Lord blessed the seventh Day, and hallowed it.* He *blest it* by his own Example, resting that Day from all his Works ; and *hallowed it* by his Command, requiring it to be kept Holy: not that God's blessing of it has infus'd any inherent Holiness into it above other Days, for both Times and Places are incapable of any such real Holiness ; but that he hath consecrated it for holy Uses, and set it apart for the Honour and Worship of himself ; for so the hallowing and sanctifying of these things is in Scripture wont to signify. Beside, God is said to bless this Day, by making it the Time in which he hath promis'd more especially to meet and bless us : for tho God be at all times and every where present with his People, yet he is more peculiarly and graciously present with them on this Day, and in the Places dedicated to his Service, than at other Times and Places ; then and there he delights to meet them, and more liberally to dispense his Grace and Blessings to them : to which end he wills us to observe his Day, and to frequent his House.

Thus we see what is requir'd in this Commandment, namely to sanctify one Day in Seven, and keep it holy unto the Lord, by sequestering our selves from all secular Affairs, and imploying it in all the solemn Acts of Piety and Religion. This common Reason and Equity may challenge from us, to give him back so small a Portion of our Time, who gives us all, and to render him this slender Tribute and Acknowledgment for all his Mercies.

To close up all, let us learn hence carefully and conscientiously to observe this Day as Holy unto the Lord, abstaining on it from all ordinary and worldly Business, and devoting it wholly to the Service of our Maker : Let us diligently attend the publick, private and secret Devotion, together with all other Acts of Mercy and Charity, that are proper to the Occasion and Solemnity of this Day, making it the Market-day for our Souls, as the rest of the Week is for our Bodies ; being as intent then on the great Affairs of the next World, as we are at other times on the lesser Concerns of this : not saying with those in *Amos*, *When will the Sabbath be over that we may sell Corn, and the New Moon that we may set forth Wheat ?* *Amos 8. 5.* but saying with *David*, *This is*

the Day which the Lord hath made, I will rejoice and be glad in it: I will take the Cup of Salvation, and call upon the Name of the Lord: I will praise the Lord in the Congregation; in the presence of all his People, will I sing praises unto him. This is to begin the Work of Heaven here on Earth, to lay up our Treasure there, to be ready when we come to make use of it. And by thus keeping a Sabbath holy unto God now, we shall e'er long celebrate an Everlasting Sabbath with him in Glory.

DISCOURSE XI.

Exod. 20. 8, 9, 10, 11. Remember that thou keep holy the Sabbath Day; six days shalt thou labour and do all that thou hast to do, but the Seventh Day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God; in it thou shalt do no manner of Work, thou, nor thy Son, nor thy Daughter, thy Man servant, nor thy Maid-servant, the Cattel, nor the Stranger that is within thy Gates: for in six Days the Lord made Heaven and Earth, the Sea, and all that in them is, and rested the Seventh Day; wherefore the Lord blessed the Seventh Day, and hallowed it.

I Treated in my last of the Affirmative part of this Precept, which requires the keeping the Sabbath, or Lord's Day holy unto the Lord: I proceed now to the

Negative part of it, which forbids all Profanation of this Day; for when we are strictly charg'd to remember this Day to keep it Holy, it manifestly condemns all unhallowing or profaning of it. But here, because there are two Extremes, some pressing too much strictness, and others allowing too great a looseness in this point, great care must be taken to avoid the Superstition of the one, and the Profaneness of the other: to which end I must enquire,

First, What it is to profane the Lord's Day, and when we may be said to do so. And,
Secondly, I must shew the sinfulness and danger of doing it.

First

First then, what is it to profane the Sabbath, or Lord's Day? and when may we be said to do so? In answer to which, I say in the general, that this is done, partly by neglecting what is requir'd, and partly by doing what is forbidden on that Day. For the better understanding of both, I say,

1. That to neglect the Worship of God in publick or private on those Times, is to profane the Lord's Day: For the honouring and serving God, being the proper Work of that Day, for which it was set apart; to neglect that, is to unhallow and profane it. Now that the worshipping of God, especially in publick, is the proper Work of this Day, is evident from the Precepts of the Old and New Testament, and likewise from the Practice of all good Men under both. The Jews were commanded to keep their Sabbath by resorting to the Temple and the Synagogues, where the Law and the Prophets *were read* and expounded *every Sabbath Day*, as we read *Acts* 13. 27. And we find our Blessed Saviour and his Apostles frequenting those Places, and joining with them on that Day in the publick Acts of Prayer, and praising God, *Luke* 4. 16. & 24. 53.

After his Resurrection, which occasion'd the change of the Sabbath from the last to the first Day of the Week, we find the Disciples meeting and joining together on that Day in all the Acts and Parts of publick Worship, *Acts* 2. 42. which Practice hath been deriv'd down and continued in the Christian Church ever since. Now to forsake these publick Assemblies, and to neglect the solemn Worship of God perform'd in them at those Times, is to profane the Lord's Day: Hence we find the Criticks deriving the Latin word *profanum*, from *procul a fano*, which is, keeping off from the Temple; it being an Argument of an evil and profligate Mind, without any just occasion to absent themselves from the Ordinances of Christ, and to withdraw from the solemn Worship of their Maker.

Neither will it suffice to say, as some profane Wretches do, that they can pray, read and serve God at home, and spend their time as well in the Closet as in the Church.

For, beside that the Apostle hath given a strict Charge to Christians, *not to forsake the assembling themselves together, as the manner of some is*; our Blessed Saviour has promis'd a greater Blessing to those that meet together in God's House, than he has to those who abide at home in their own. Moreover, they who urge this, commonly use it as a Cloke or Colour for their Profaneness: for
instead

instead of the private Exercises of Religion they pretend to, they too often spend the Day, either in indulging the Pleasures, or immersing themselves in the Cares of this Life. Nor is it a just Excuse for neglecting the publick Worship of God in the Church, that they perform these Duties in the private Meetings and Conventicles of Sectaries.

For these are the Nurseries of Discord and Division, that destroy the Harmony and Reverence of Divine Worship, and naturally break that Order, Unity and Charity that is to be maintain'd among Christians: for which reason our Blessed Saviour has willed Christians to *agree in their Petitions, to speak the same things, and with one Mind and one Mouth to glorify God*; which cannot be without joining together in a publick, uniform, and regular way of Worship, to which the Peace and Unity of the Church, as well as the Duty we owe to them that rule over us in the Lord, indispensably oblige us.

2. To neglect the private as well as publick Offices of Devotion, is to profane the Lord's Day; for we must not think the Sabbath over when the solemn Assemblies are ended: there remain other Offices of Piety and Devotion to be done at home, as Praying, Reading, Conference and Meditation, which are not to be omitted on that Day. Every House should be in some sense a Temple dedicated unto God, where the daily Sacrifices of Prayer and Praises are to be offer'd to Him; and every Master of a Family should be in some sense a Priest, to instruct his Children and Servants, and to bless and pray for all that are committed to his Charge: This we find commended in *Abraham* the Father of the Faithful, who taught *his Children the Way of the Lord*, and thereby deriv'd a Blessing to his Posterity; the neglect whereof we find condemn'd by the Prophet, who denounces a Curse on them *that forget God, and the Families that call not upon his Name*.

But beside these, there are Seasons of secret Devotion, in which our Saviour has willed us to *enter our Closet, and shut the Door; and to pray to our Father who seeth in secret, and by so doing he will reward us openly*, Mat. 6. 6. Thus is publick, private and secret Prayer, the great Work and Business of this Day; by observing whereof we keep it holy, and by neglecting of them we desecrate and profane it.

But there is, secondly, another way of profaning this Day, and that is not only by neglecting what is requir'd, but by doing what is forbidden on it. As,

1. To

1. To do any thing that is sinful on the Lord's Day, is a manifest profanation of it; for all Sin is directly contrary to the Holiness of God, and the Sacred Offices we are then to perform to him; and therefore to commit it at those times, must certainly be an Abomination to him. Indeed, Sin and Wickedness being the Works of the Devil, are every day to be abstain'd from, but more especially on the Lord's Day, which is devoted only to Holy Purposes; and to commit them then aggravates and doubles the Impiety.

2. To do the common and ordinary Works of our Callings, or to exact the Labours of our Servants, or the Drudgeries of our Cattel on the Lord's Day, is a plain violation of this Commandment; for the Rest here injoin'd, requires an abstinence from all manner of Work, and that not only in our own Persons, but extends likewise to all our Dependents, that our Children, Servants and Cattel, may rest as well as we: Not that we are debar'd from the necessary Actions and innocent Refreshments of Humane Life; for our Saviour hath plainly declar'd Works of Necessity and Mercy lawful to be done on that Day both to Man and Beast; but that we sequester our selves from all worldly Business, the better to attend the Service of God, and that we allow our Children and Servants competent Rest, Time and Leisure to do the same. So that to labour our selves on that Day, or to require those committed to our Charge to do so, is to pollute the Sabbath, or profane the Lord's Day.

But was not the keeping of the Sabbath, a *Sign and Covenant peculiar to the Jews only*? as we read *Exod. 31. 16.* and *Ezek. 20. 11, 12, 20.* Does not the Apostle forbid Christians to *judge one another upon the account of a Festival, New Moon, or Sabbath?* *Col. 2. 16.* Yea, does he not reckon it a Mark of Judaism, to *observe Days, and Months, and Years?* *Gal. 4. 10.* which words, as appears by the Context, relate to the observation of Festivals and Sabbaths: And how then can we urge these things on the practice of Christians under the Gospel?

In answer hereunto, the Jewish Sabbaths indeed, as to the Time, Occasion and Manner of observing them, had something peculiar only to the Jews; in which sense they were ritual, and *shadows of good things to come*, which are therefore done away, and may not now be urg'd on the practice of Christians: for as Circumcision, so the keeping of the Sabbath was ordain'd to be a Sign and Covenant between God and the People of the Jews,

to discern their peculiar Relation to him, and distinguish them from all other People. But the Moral part of this Law, which requires the allotting some portion of our time to the Service of our Maker, belongs to all Men, and is of perpetual and indispensable Obligation. As for the measure and proportion of Time to be set apart for this purpose, God himself having assign'd the seventh Part, and both the Practice and Authority of the Church having directed to and confirm'd the same, it becomes our Duty to own it, and our Sin to neglect or profane it. From whence I proceed,

Secondly, To consider the sinfulness and danger of this Profaneness; and both these will be evident, by considering,

1. That the unhallowing the Sabbath or Lord's Day, bewrays a very great slight and contempt of our Maker. He that truly loves or honours any Person, will be desirous to meet and converse with him, he will delight in his Company, and imbrace all Opportunities of injoying it; whereas the declining these things is an Argument not only of Coldness, but Contempt. The only way we have of injoying God here, is in his Ordinances, in which he hath promised to meet and to bless us; so that to turn our backs upon these, is in effect to renounce all Commerce or Communion with him, and to say with them in *Job*, *Depart from us, we desire not the knowledge of thy Ways*. God Almighty, to withdraw us from the World, and to preserve the remembrance of himself among us, hath appointed one Day in Seven to be imploy'd in his Service and dedicated to his Honour, leaving a strict Charge, that whatever else we forget, we should *remember to keep this Day holy*. Now to profane this Day by neglecting his Service, and putting it to other common Uses, is to cast off the Love, Fear, and Remembrance of him, which is the greatest slight and indignity that can be offer'd to him.

2. The profaning the Lord's Day, is not only a high Indignity, but a great piece of Injustice to our Maker; for he who is the Lord of all Time, having reserv'd and consecrated this Portion of it to himself, it must be not only sinful but sacrilegious to rob him of it. Common Justice requires to render to all their Dues; and if we cannot without great Injustice defraud our Brother, much less may we rob God who is the Author and Giver of all we have.

Moreover, 3. to profane the Lord's Day, is an act of great Ingratitude; for God Almighty having given us so liberal a Portion
of

of Time for our own Affairs, and taken so small a part of it to be imploy'd in his Service: that is, having given us six Days in the Week, and reserved but one for himself, it must be monstrous Ingratitude to deny him that, and to misemploy that time upon our Lusts which he hath set apart for the celebration of his own Honour. Had it been propounded to us to allow the proportion of Time for God's Service, could we in reason assign a less than himself hath done? He hath given us the odds of six to one, and sure we cannot without shame and blushing withhold that from him: which is sufficient to convince us of the great Guilt of violating this Law by profaning the Lord's Day.

Neither is the Danger less than the Evil of this Practice; for this Sin has frequently inkindled the Wrath of God, and drawn down the doleful Effects of his Displeasure. We read under the Old Law, how God commanded the breakers of the Sabbath to be cut off, and punish'd the violation of this Commandment with a signal and swift Destruction: The Man that gather'd sticks on the Sabbath-day, was order'd by God himself to be put to death: *The Congregation gathering together, ston'd him with Stones till he died, Numb. 15. 35, 36.* And as the Lord promised to reward the observation of the Sabbath with all sorts of Blessings, so he threatens to punish the contempt of it with the forest Evils: *Jer. 17. 24, 25, &c. If ye diligently hearken unto me, saith the Lord, to bring in no Burden thro the Gates on the Sabbath-day, but hallow the Sabbath-day to do no Work therein; then shall there enter into this City Kings and Princes sitting on the Throne of David, and the City shall remain for ever: But if ye will not hearken unto me to hallow the Sabbath-day, then will I kindle a Fire in the Gates thereof, and it shall devour the Palaces of Jerusalem, and shall not be quenched.*

Neither is God less solicitous about the observation of the Lord's Day under the Gospel, than he was of the Jewish Sabbath under the Law; and they that profane the one, shall fare no better than they that polluted the other: For as great, if not a greater portion of Time is to be devoted to God under the Gospel, than was requir'd of the Jews under the Law, since the great Mercy upon which their Sabbath was founded is common to us, and our Obligations since are become much greater. For if the Creation of the World, and God's Rest from it, were a just Motive to consecrate that Day as Holy to the Lord on which he rested, sure the Resurrection of our Blessed Saviour, on which all our Hopes depend, may justly exact the same Tribute, and

H h h

consecrate

consecrate the Day on which he rose: and consequently to neglect or profane that Day so devoted to him, is at once to provoke God, and affront our Saviour.

Thus we see what is requir'd in this Commandment; namely, to keep one Day in seven Holy unto the Lord, by resting on it from all worldly and bodily Labour, and devoting it to the public and private exercises of Piety and Religion, to which we are encourag'd by the Example of God himself, whom to imitate is our greatest Glory and Happiness; and likewise by his solemn Dedication of this Day to these purposes. Moreover,

We see also what is forbidden in this Law; namely the Abuse and Profanation of this Day, either by neglecting the sacred Offices of Religion, or prostituting it to sinful and secular Purposes.

It remains then that we *remember the Sabbath or Lord's day to keep it Holy*, in the way and manner describ'd; and as carefully avoid all neglect and profanation of it: that so *resting from our Labors* on this Day, we may shortly *rest from all our Labors*, and be receiv'd into that everlasting Rest which remains for the People of God.

DISCOURSE XII.

Exod. 20. 12. *Honor thy Father and thy Mother, that thy days may be long upon the Land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.*

HAVING finish'd the four Commandments of the First Table, which more immediately respect our Duty to God;

I proceed to those of the Second Table, which more particularly relate to our Duty to Man. The

First whereof is contain'd in these words, *Honor thy Father and thy Mother, &c.* Where we have a Precept, *Honor thy Father and thy Mother*; and a Promise annex'd to it, *That thy days may be long in the Land which the Lord thy God giveth thee*: call'd therefore the first Commandment with Promise. In handling these words, I must begin with the Precept; and therein enquire,

First, Whom we are to understand here by *Father and Mother*. And,

Secondly, What is the Honor we are requir'd to give them.

For

For the *First*, By Father and Mother here we are to understand,

1. Our Natural Parents that begat us, not excluding our Grandfathers and Grandmothers that begat them, and from whom we mediate derive our Being : these are call'd *Fathers of the Flesh*, and both in Scripture and common Use are generally stil'd Fathers and Mothers.

2. Kings and Queens are in Scripture-dialect frequently so stil'd; and all that are in any Temporal Authority over us are often call'd by the Name of Fathers, because they succeed in that Power and Authority, which Fathers originally had over those that descended from them. Thus *Adam*, *Noah* and the rest of the Patriarchs were both Fathers and Kings to all their Posterity, having the Power of Life and Death, and in all things ruling and reigning over them. The Kings of the *Philistines* were generally stil'd *Abimelech*, which signifies *the King my Father*; as we read, *Gen.* 20. and Princes are still call'd *Patres Patrie*, Fathers of their Country. The Prophet *Isaiah* stiles Kings nursing Fathers, and Queens nursing Mothers, from that tender Care they have or should have in fostering and defending the Church.

3. By Father and Mother here we understand likewise our Spiritual Fathers, that begat us again unto God; such are the Bishops and Pastors of the Church, by whose Blessing and Instructions *we are born again to a lively Hope*: hence *St. Paul* declares himself a Father to the *Corinthians*, because he had begotten them again unto Christ through the Gospel, *1 Cor.* 4. 15. and elsewhere he calls the *Galatians* his Children for the same reason. In the Old Testament, *Joseph* is said to be a *Father unto Pharaoh*, *Gen.* 45. 8. And *Elisha* calls the Prophet *Elijah* his Father, *2 Kings* 1. 12. And we know the Name of Fathers is continued to the Bishops and Pastors of the Church to this Day.

4. The Masters and Mistresses of Families, are in Scripture sometimes stil'd Fathers and Mothers; and that not only with respect to their Children, but likewise to their Servants, of whom they have the care and oversight. Hence the Master is stil'd *Paterfamilias*, the Father of the Family; and *Naaman* the Syrian is call'd a Father by his Servants, *2 Kings* 5. 13.

Lastly, All Superiors in Age, Wisdom and Knowledg, are here compriz'd under the Titles of Father and Mother; thus the Antients are stil'd Fathers, and we are bid to rise up and re-

rence the gray Hairs of venerable Antiquity. The Senators of Rome were call'd *Patres Conscripti*, and the younger were requir'd to reverence them: all that excell'd in the Knowledg of any Art or Science, or taught them to others, were called Fathers. Thus *Jabal* is said to be the *Father of all that dwell in Tents*, and *Jubal* the *Father of all that handle the Harp or Organ*, Gen. 4. 20, 21. because they first invented and instructed others in the Use and Knowledg of them. And St. Paul advises *Timothy* to *entreat the Elder Men as Fathers, and the Elder Women as Mothers*, 1 Tim. 5. 1, 2.

In short then, all Parents both Natural and Civil, all that are any way above us in Place, Parts, Power, Age, or Office, are here comprehended under the stile of Fathers and Mothers. From whence I proceed,

Secondly, To consider the Honor here requir'd to be paid to them: And this in general imports all that decent and becoming Behaviour which is to be shewn to all that are in any of those foremention'd ways above us; for this Commandment being an Abstract of our Duty to Superiors, the Honor here enjoyn'd must comprize the whole of our Duty towards them: and this may be reduc'd to these two Heads.

1. An honorable and befitting esteem of them in our Mind. And,

2. A decent demeanor towards them with our Body: the one is the inward, the other the outward Honor, that is to be given to them.

For the First: To honor Father and Mother is to think honourably and worthily of all our Superiors, for so the word Honor in the Original signifies, not to account lightly of a thing, but to esteem it of weight and moment. To esteem lightly of a Person is to despise him, and to set a value upon another is to honor him; accordingly we are here commanded to have our Superiors in great Account, to set a due Price and Value upon them, and to have them in Veneration: And indeed the Excellency stamp'd upon them, by which God hath made them our Superiors, may challenge this from us, to look upon them as rais'd above the common Level, to be vested with some Authority over us, and to be regarded accordingly. Now this inward Honor includes Love, Fear, and other Affections of the Mind, according to the different Nature, Quality, and degrees of Superiority

riority they may have over us. Beside which we are,

2. To express this inward Honor of the Mind by the outward Reverence of the Body ; rising up to our Superiors as *Solomon* did to his Mother *Bathsheba*, uncovering the Head, and bowing the Body to them ; speaking honorably of them upon all Occasions, giving them the Cap and the Knee, and all other outward Tokens and Signs of Honor. This is in general the Honor here commanded, and is due to all our Superiors.

More particularly, Children are to honor their Natural Parents ;

1. By loving them with a sincere and intire Affection, as those from whom they receiv'd their Being.

2. By fearing and reverencing of them, for so it is requir'd, *Levit. 9. 3. Ye shall fear every man his Father and Mother.*

3. By obeying of them and hearkening to their Counsel and Instructions ; so the Apostle directs, *Children obey your Parents in all Things, for this is well pleasing unto God, Col. 3. 20.*

4. By rendring them all Gratitude and Retribution ; *Let Children shew all Piety at Home and requite their Parents, for this is good and acceptable before God, 1 Tim. 5. 4.* Considering the tender Care of Parents in their Breeding, Maintenance and Education, before they could help themselves, they stand obliged to relieve, succour and support them under all their wants and weakness ; this Nature it self prompts us to, and all civil Nations have ever own'd and practis'd it.

Again, we are to honor our Civil Parents and Governors ;

1. By reverencing their Persons, looking upon them as God's Anointed, and behaving our selves towards them as Persons vested with his Authority.

2. By obeying their Laws, made for the preservation of Order and the publick Good : for so we are bid to *obey them that have the rule over us, and to submit to every Ordinance of Man for the Lord's sake.*

3. By paying Tribute, and entertaining a grateful sense of the many Blessings and Privileges we enjoy by their Protection, the better to ease and assist them under the burden of their weighty Cares and Troubles.

4. By praying for them, and calling in the Aid and Assistance of Heaven for their welfare and direction in all their Affairs, *that under them we may live quiet and peaceable Lives in all Godliness and Honesty.* All this Reason and Religion as well as the common Safety strongly oblige us to.

Moreover,

Moreover, we are to honor our Spiritual Fathers and Pastors;

1. By reverencing them *as the Ministers of Christ, and Stewards of the manifold Grace of God: Know them that labor among you in the Word and Doctrine* (saith the Apostle) *and esteem them highly for their Work sake,* 1 Thes. 5. 13. *For they watch for your Souls, as those that must give an Account:* and therefore he would have them accounted worthy of double Honor, and to be treated as the Ambassadors of Christ.

2. By receiving their Doctrine, being, while they keep to their Rule, *the Word of God and not of Man:* for which reason our Saviour himself declares, *He that heareth you, heareth me; and he that despises you, despises me.*

3. By affording them Maintenance, and particularly that which God himself as well as the Laws of the Country have allotted to them, the Tithes and Offerings; which whoever withholds in whole or in part, is a Robber of God, and guilty of vile and notorious Sacrilege.

4. By praying for them, that they may have those Assistances of God's Holy Spirit, as are necessary for the discharge of their Holy Calling; that both Ministers may keep to sound Doctrine, and the People hear and receive it as the Oracles of God. All this the Duty we owe to God and our own Souls do evidently exact from us.

Furthermore, Servants are to honor their Masters and Fathers of Families;

1. By obeying all their lawful Commands, for so the Apostle's Charge is, *Servants obey your Masters in all things,* Eph. 6. 6. and that not with grudging or answering again, but with a ready and willing Mind, *as doing Service to the Lord, and not unto men.*

2. By shewing all Fidelity in what is intrusted to them, not embezzling or purloining their Master's Goods, but to be true to their Trust, and faithfully manage and account for what is committed to them; that they may receive the reward of good and faithful Servants, and be admitted into their Master's Joy.

3. By shewing all diligence in the Work and Business that is set them, *not with Eye-service as Men-pleasers, but with singleness of Heart, doing it as to the Lord.*

4. By shewing all Meekness and Patience, *not answering again,* but receiving all just Rebukes, and amending upon them.

This Christianity hath made due from all Servants to their Masters, and that not only to the Good and Gentle, but likewise

wise to the Froward, as we are told in 1 Pet. 2. 20.

Lastly, We are to honor our Fathers in Age, Dignity, or any other Gifts and Endowments of the Mind ;

1. By rendring them all due Respect and Reverence : This is due to the Wisdom and Experience of aged Men : *A hoary Head (saith Solomon) is a Crown of Glory, if found in the way of Righteousness ;* and therefore we are bid to rise up before the hoary Head, and honor the Face of an old Man, *Lev. 19. 32.*

2. By lending an ear to their Counsel and Instruction ; for Youth is oftentimes rash and heady, too apt to be misled and overcome with every Temptation, and therefore stands in frequent need of the Advice of the Wise and Aged ; for which reason we are bid to ask Counsel of the Antients, for *Days will speak, and multitude of Tears teach Wisdom.*

3. By submitting to their grave and just Reproofs, which are sometimes necessary to awaken and reclaim us, and therefore should be receiv'd with Meekness and Gratitude : *Let the Righteous smite me friendly, and reprove me (saith holy David) and it shall be a precious Balm, that shall not break my head.*

4. By blessing God for the Gifts and Graces confer'd upon them, endeavouring to improve by them in Vertue and Knowledge, and learning from their Instructions and Example.

These are the Duties of Inferiors towards their Superiors. But because the reciprocal Duties of Superiors to their Inferiors are likewise here imply'd and commanded in this Precept, 'twill be requisite to mention some of the chief of them. And,

1. Natural Parents are to love, educate, and provide for their Children, bringing them up in the Fear and Nurture of the Lord, thereby providing for the Happiness and Salvation of their Souls. Moreover, they are to breed them up in some honest Calling or Course of Life, for the Sustenance of their Bodies ; that they may not only be arm'd against their own, but able to relieve the Necessities of others. They are to begin with their Children betimes, instilling good Principles into them, and setting before them a good Example ; but above all they are to pray for them, to give them their Blessing, and to recommend them to the Grace and Blessing of their Father in Heaven.

2. Civil Parents, that is, Princes and Governors, are to protect the Persons and Rights of their Subjects, ruling over them with Justice, Clemency, and Moderation ; knowing that they are *God's Ministers to them for good, attending continually on this very thing ;*

thing; not bearing the Sword in vain, but using it to the terror of Evil-doers, and the Defence of them that do well: more especially, Kings are to be nursing Fathers, and Queens nursing Mothers to the Church, preserving it in that Fulness of Power and Authority with which Christ hath invested it.

3. Spiritual Fathers and Pastors are to teach and instruct the People committed to their charge, feeding their respective Flocks with sound Doctrine, and going before them in a pious Example, ruling over them with Diligence and Fidelity, and like good Stewards of the Mysteries of God, dispensing to every one their Meat in due season.

4. Masters and Fathers of Families are to rule their House well, governing their Children and Servants with meekness and discretion, not provoking them to wrath, or being bitter against them, but gentle and easy to be intreated; providing things honest in the sight of all Men; encouraging the Good, and correcting the Bad; in all things shewing themselves the Servants of God, knowing that they themselves have a Master in Heaven.

Lastly, Fathers in Age, Experience, or any Endowments of Mind, are to be Patterns of Gravity, Wisdom and Sobriety to the younger sort, advising and directing them in case of Doubts, wisely rebuking their Rashness and Folly, and guiding them in the ways of Vertue by their Counsel and Example.

Thus we see the Sense of this Precept, of *honouring our Father and Mother*, which is an excellent Rule to direct Inferiors in all their Duty to their respective Superiors. To which is added,

Secondly, A Promise to encourage and enforce the Practice of it; *That thy Days may be long in the Land, which the Lord thy God giveth thee.* The Blessing here promis'd is a long and happy Life, and that to be spent in the Land of *Canaan*, the great Mercy promis'd to the *Israelites*, and that to which all their Hopes and Desires tended: so that the Promise in its literal sense seems peculiar only to Jews, as referring to the Land of *Canaan*, which was alone promis'd and given unto them. Indeed the Jews being a carnal People, and wholly affected with terrene and worldly Objects, were allur'd to their Duty chiefly, if not only, by temporal Promises; Length of Days and earthly Prosperity, especially in the Promis'd Land, were the great Motives to Obedience. Hence God Almighty presses this Commandment with a Promise to bless dutiful Children with long Life in the comfortable Possession of that good Land; and we find *Solomon* pressing Wisdom upon the like

like Inducements, because *Length of Days* was in her right Hand, and in her left Riches and Honour.

But tho the literal Sense of this Promise concern'd the Jews only, to whom this Land was given, yet the mystical Sense and Substance of it appertains likewise to us Christians: for the Land of *Canaan* was a Type of Heaven, and under the Promise of that was couch'd another and better Country; so *Abraham* and *Sarah* understood it, who lookt thro this Land of Promise to a better and heavenly Country, and so 'tis expounded by Christ and his Apostles, who will us to tread in the steps of those Fore-runners in the Faith, that lookt upon themselves as Pilgrims and Strangers upon Earth, and by their Patience and Constancy shew'd that they fought another, even a celestial Country, where their long Life is run into Eternity, and their happy Days crown'd with Glory and Immortality.

The Sum of all is, that the Promise of a long Life was literally intended and fulfil'd to the Jews, by their enjoying many and happy Days in the Land of *Canaan*. To the Christians it is fulfill'd partly in the Letter, and partly in the Mystery; in the Letter, by enjoying a long and prosperous Life upon Earth, when it is convenient for them; in the Mystery, by translating them to a longer and happier Life in Heaven: the Apostle affirming that Godliness hath the Promise of the Life that now is, and of that which is to come, 1 *Tim.* 4. 8.

And here we may observe the Congruity between the Duty and the Reward: They who are grateful to those, from whom under God they receive Life, shall enjoy that Life long and well; which Mercy is deriv'd partly from the Blessing of God upon dutiful Children, and partly from the Care, Sustenance, and Prayers of pious Parents.

This is a brief account of what is requir'd in this Commandment; namely, a faithful Discharge of the Duties we owe to all those who by any Relation, Power, or Preeminence, are plac'd above us, to whom we are to pay all Acts both of internal and external Honour. Hereunto we are encourag'd by the greatest of all Rewards, *viz.* Length of Days here in this World, when it shall make for our Happiness, and eternal Life in the World to come; both which are owing not only to the Dispensations of Divine Providence, but in some measure to the nature of the thing: for Obedience to Superiors keeps all things in that due Order and Decorum, that conduces much to the Comfort and Continuance of Life, and tends mightily to promote both the publick and pri-

vate Peace. And now nothing remains, but to be mindful of these Duties in our several Stations, and to pay all that Honour, Reverence, and Obedience that is due to our respective Superiors: so will the World turn upon the right Hinges, and we shall enjoy Peace here, and endless Prosperity hereafter.

DISCOURSE XIII.

Exod. 20. 12. *Honour thy Father and thy Mother, that thy Days may be long in the Land, which the Lord thy God giveth thee.*

WE have seen the Affirmative part of this Commandment, which requires all Inferiors to pay the several Offices of Duty and Observance to their respective Superiors: I come now to the Negative part of it, which forbids all unfutable Behaviour and Deportment towards them; for the Precept of honouring Father and Mother, must necessarily condemn the contrary Practice of dishonouring them. Who are meant by Father and Mother, has been already open'd, viz. all our Superiors, both Natural, Spiritual, and Political. What is the Honour due to them by this Law, has been likewise particularly describ'd.

Now the with-holding of this Honour, and acting contrary thereto, is the dishonouring of them, and is the Fault forbidden in this Commandment. And therefore,

1. Childrens with-holding the Honour and Obedience due to their natural Parents, is here plainly condemn'd: This is an unnatural Vice, attended with the highest Ingratitude, and is therefore condemn'd by the Voice of Nature, beside which 'tis severely censur'd and threaten'd in the Book of God: *Cursed be he that setteth light by Father or Mother, Deut. 27. 16. And he that curseth Father or Mother, let him die the death, Exod. 21. 17.* The rebellious Son that would not obey the Voice of his Father, nor hearken to the Counsel of his Mother, was by the Law to be ston'd to death by all the Men of the City. Solomon tells us, that *the Eye that mocketh his Father, or despiseth to obey his Mother, the Ravens of the Valleys shall pick it out, and the young Eagles shall eat it, Prov. 30. 17.* meaning, that God in a dreadful and wonderful man-

ner

ner will avenge that unnatural Wickedness. Whence we learn the heinous Nature and Guilt of this Sin, which is so odious in the sight of God and Man, that both he that practiseth it, and he that would excuse it, must incur the Censure and Punishment of both.

We read indeed of a corrupt Doctrine of the *Scribes* and *Pharisees*, which taught Children to evade their Duty to their Parents, and by a pretended Gift call'd *Corban*, offer'd for them at the Altar, would excuse them from succouring and relieving them in their greatest Necessities: Mat. 15. 5, 6. *Whosoever shall say to his Father or Mother, It is a Gift by whatsoever thou mayst be profited by me, and honour not his Father or Mother, shall be free.* But this is condemn'd by our Saviour as a vile piece of Hypocrisy, whereby they endeavour'd to evacuate the Law, and make the Commandments of God of none effect by their Traditions. For Nature it self, as well as Religion, will teach us to sustain those in their need, by whom we our selves have been sustain'd; and that our greatest Respects and Services must be due to those, to whom we owe our Being. And therefore to withdraw that Love and Assistance that is due to Parents, to turn the deaf ear to their Counsel and Admonitions, to disclose their Nakedness, and rather to mock at than hide their Infirmities, is a manifest Violation of the Honour we are here requir'd to pay them, and a plain Breach of this Commandment.

2. All Disobedience to Political or Civil Parents, that is, to Magistrates and Governors, is here forbidden; for these are the Fathers of our Country, that preside over us for good, and provide for our Safety and Welfare: 'Tis by them that we enjoy great *Quietness*, and very worthy Deeds are done to the whole Nation by their Providence, as *Tertullus* the Orator told *Felix* the Governour, *Acts* 24. 2, 3. And therefore 'tis fit that we accept it always and in all places with all thankfulness, rendring them all Honour for the great Care they take of us, and paying them Obedience for the many Blessings we enjoy by their Vigilance. Contrary hereunto is all Contempt and Resistance of lawful Authority, all Affronts offer'd to the Persons, and all Disobedience to the Laws of Princes. The Apostle tells us, that to resist the higher Powers is to resist the Ordinance of God, and they that resist shall receive to themselves Damnation, *Rom.* 13. 2, 3. They are God's Ministers as well as our Fathers, and therefore we are to submit to them both for God's sake and our own, obeying them that have the Rule over us, without murmuring or resistance.

We may not resist them even in our Hearts, by wishing or desiring any ill to them; for we are bid *not to curse the King, no not in our Thoughts, for a Bird of the Air shall carry the Voice, and that which bath wings shall tell the matter*, Eccles. 10. 20.

We may not resist them with the Head, by plotting or contriving against them; for to conspire against our Prince is to be *Confederate against God, and to take counsel against the Lord, and against his Anointed*. Again,

We may not resist them with the Tongue, by speaking evil of them, or *slandering the Footsteps of God's Anointed*; for we are strictly charg'd not to *speake evil of the Ruler of the People*.

Much less may we resist them with the Hand, by taking up Arms or fighting against them; for *who can stretch forth his hand against the Lord's Anointed, and be blameless?* 2 Sam. 1. *Against a King* (saith Solomon) *there is no rising up*. There is no doing it either lawfully or safely, for we may not take upon us to resist, whom we are requir'd to obey; they that do so are threatned with Damnation, that is, not only with all the present Punishments of this Life, but with eternal Misery and Destruction in the next.

3. All Disobedience to our Spiritual Fathers, the Bishops and Pastors of the Church, is forbidden likewise in this Commandment: for we are strictly charg'd to *obey them that rule over us in the Lord, for they watch for our Souls; to esteem them highly for their Work sake; to look upon them as the Ministers and Ambassadors of Christ; and so to account them worthy of double Honour*, viz. the inward Honour and Reverence of the Mind, and the outward Honour and Respect of the Body, both which are due to them for their Calling and Work sake: For these Spiritual Fathers perform the same or like Offices to our Souls, that our natural Parents do to our Bodies; they *beget us again unto God thro the Gospel*; they *travel in birth with us, till Christ be form'd in us*; they *feed us with Milk*, whilst we are Infants in Christianity; and give us *stronger Meats*, when we arrive at the Stature of Men in Christ Jesus. For which good Offices we are to account of them as our Fathers in God, and to love, fear, and honour them, as those that are appointed to teach and rule over us. The Apostle wills us to hearken and submit to them as our spiritual Guides, *Heb. 13. 17.* that is, to receive their Instructions, and not only to remember, but to put in practice all their pious Exhortations. Whatsoever they deliver to us either in publick Preaching or in private Admo-

Admonitions, agreeable to God's Word, is to be embrac'd and obey'd as coming from him ; for *he that beareth you (saith Christ) beareth me.* Accordingly we find St. Paul commending the Romans, that *they obey'd from the heart that Form of Doctrine that was deliver'd to them,* Rom. 6. 17. Now to prove refractory to that spiritual Power which Christ hath ordain'd in his Church, to turn the deaf ear to the Call of his Ministers, to despise their Censures, and to reject their Doctrine, is to despise Christ, and is a great piece of that Disobedience to Superiors forbidden in this Commandment. This is what St. Jude stiles, *despising Dominions, and speaking evil of Dignities* ; which is one part of the Character of those that are reserv'd for the Judgment of the last Day, Jude 6.

4. Here is forbidden likewise all Disobedience to Masters and Governours of Families. These are in a sense Fathers to all that are plac'd under them, being intrusted with the Care and good Government of those lesser Societies ; and as they are to rule with Diligence and Clemency, without being imperious or tyrannical to any of their Dependents, so ought these to obey with Chearfulness, and not to gainsay or neglect their lawful Injunctions : and therefore all Undutifulness of Wives to their Husbands, and Unfaithfulness of Servants to their Masters, stand condemn'd by this Law. The unjust Steward that embezl'd his Master's Goods, receiv'd the Doom of a wicked and faithless Servant, to be bound hand and foot, and cast into outer darkness ; and all careless, false and unprofitable Servants will in the end fare no better.

Lastly, Here is forbidden all indecent and disrespectful Behaviour to all our Superiors in Age, Quality, or any other Gifts and Endowments of the Mind. Aged Men are in Scripture and common Use stil'd Fathers, and are to be honour'd and treated by us as such ; their Gravity and Experience challenge the Respect, and command the Veneration of younger Years : and therefore to despise old Age, or withhold the Respect due to gray Hairs, is a plain Violation of this Precept, which requires us to *honour Father and Mother.* For it is a Breach of good Manners, and a Contempt of Order and Decency, to deny them that Regard and Reverence which God and Nature have appointed for them ; which is a matter so displeasing unto God, that we find many Instances of Divine Vengeance on such as practis'd it. A remarkable one we have in 2 Kings 2. 23, 24. where we read, that when *Elisha* was going to Bethel, there came forth Children out of the City,

City, mocking him, and saying, Go up thou Bald-pate, Go up thou Bald-pate; at which Elisha turn'd back, and looking on them, curs'd them in the Name of the Lord: and there came forth two She-Bears out of the Wood, and tore forty two Children in pieces: So highly was God Almighty offended at their mocking and deriding the old Prophet! Hence the Prophet *Isaiah* reckons it a Curse or Judgment upon any Nation, when the Children behave themselves proudly against the Antients, *Isa. 3. 5.* And this should teach all Children this piece of Education, to rise up to gray Hairs, and not to deride, but reverence Old Age. Again,

They that excel others in any of the Gifts and Endowments of the Mind, are often stil'd Fathers; their Learning and Wisdom giving them a sort of Preeminence and Superiority above others that have a scantier Proportion. Now as these are to be thankful to God for the Gifts bestow'd on them, and likewise to use them to the ends for which they were given, so are others requir'd to reverence them upon the account of them, not lessening or detracting from their Abilities, but owning the Grace of God, and extolling his Goodness towards them; paying a deference to their better Judgment, being willing to learn of them, and submitting to their greater Wisdom. This Lesson Christian Modesty it self teaches us, to esteem others better than our selves, especially those that are so, and in honour to prefer one another, as the Apostle directs, *Rom. 12.* In a word,

All that are superior to us in Birth, Quality, Estate, or in any Degree in the World, are in the Language of the Scripture call'd Fathers; whom we are therefore requir'd to honour: so that to envy or derogate from any one's greatness, to deny the Place or Respect due to their Degree or Quality, to set up the Base above the Honourable, and to refuse to yield to the Wisdom and Authority of our Betters, is to break the Order of the World, and a manifest Breach of this Commandment.

Thus we see as well what is forbidden, as what is requir'd in this first Precept of the second Table; which settles the relative Duties of Superiors and Inferiors towards each other.

And as we are encourag'd to the Observation of this Precept by the Promise of a long Life, so is there a Threatning of shorter and worse days imply'd in it to the Breakers of it: for the Promise annex'd to this Law would be of little force, if the Breakers of it fare as well and live as long as they that keep it. But that 'tis otherwise, both the Precepts and Examples of Holy Scripture may

may easily satisfy us. For as God prolongs the Days of dutiful and obedient Children, so does he shorten the Days of the stubborn and disobedient; commanding those that curse Father and Mother to be put to death, *Deut. 27. 16.* Indeed disobedient Children wanting the Influence of the Divine Blessing, frequently fall into those Evils that shorten their days, and bring them to untimely ends, as may be seen in *Abimelech* and *Abalom*, who were both cut off for their Disobedience, and fell a Sacrifice to their own Folly and Rashness. But as Length of days in the Land of *Canaan* betoken'd a more immortal Life to be enjoy'd in Heaven, so to be depriv'd of it represents everlasting Death, and leads to an endless Abode in the Regions of Woe and Misery. And as the former affords abundant Encouragement to do what is requir'd, so is the latter a sufficient Determent from what is forbidden in this Commandment.

DISCOURSE XIV.

Exod. 20. 13. *Thou shalt not kill.*

HAVING briefly explain'd the Relative Duties that belong to Men as Members of Society, and shew'd the Demeanour due to the several Stations and Capacities in which they stand to one another, the Subject of the Fifth Commandment: I proceed to the following Precepts of the Second Table; which respect Men in their private Capacity, and tend to secure them in all the Rights and Properties appertaining thereunto. And because the first and dearest thing we possess is Life, therefore this Sixth Commandment helps to preserve that, and to secure our Persons from all Violence and Bloodshed, in these words, *Thou shalt not kill.*

Which Commandment being negative, I must first consider what is forbidden, and then what is requir'd in it. And here the great thing prohibited in this Precept is the attempting upon or taking away Life, together with all kind of Violence offer'd to the Person of any.

But for the better understanding hereof, 'twill be necessary to enquire, whether all killing or taking away of Life be
here.

here condemn'd as unlawful: and if not, what sort of killing that is, which is here forbidden?

For the first, to omit the killing of brute Beasts, about which there can be no question, the great Maker and Sovereign of the World having granted to Mankind the free Use and full Dominion over them: The only difficulty is, how far it may be lawful to destroy those of our own Kind, or to take away the Life of any human Creature?

For the resolving whereof, it is certain that God Almighty, the sole Lord and Disposer of all things, has granted to some Persons a Power of Life and Death for the good of the Whole, as will be evident in the following Cases.

1. Magistrates in the Execution of Justice may and ought to put capital Offenders to death, without the Breach of this Law; for God himself hath requir'd, that *whosoever sheddeth Man's Blood, by Man shall his Blood be shed*, Gen. 9. 6: This is no more than is necessary for the common Safety; for without this, Cruelty would every where abound, and the Cries of Murder and Bloodshedding would be daily heard in our streets. To prevent which, 'tis farther added, *Thine Eye shall not pity, nor thy Hand spare, but Life shall go for Life*, Deut. 19. 21. To this end hath God intrusted Magistrates with the Sword of Justice, which they are requir'd not to bear in vain, but to draw it forth to the terror of *Evil-doers, and the defence of those that do well*: Hence they are stil'd *God's Ministers, and Avengers to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil*, Rom. 13. 4. 'Tis the Magistrate's Duty and Province to preserve the publick Peace, by punishing such as break it; and where the Offence is capital, they may in a due Course of Justice dispose of mens Lives, who by the Laws of God and Man have justly forfeited them.

2. Soldiers authoriz'd by Sovereign Powers in a lawful War, may kill and slay, without breaking this Commandment. For War, in the differences between Princes, is an Appeal to Heaven for Justice, and referring Cases to God Almighty, which cannot be otherwise decided; in which case the Battel is the Lord's, and they that fight in them receive their Commission from him. It cannot be doubted but Sovereign Princes may lawfully make war against wrongful Invaders and rebellious Subjects; and when amicable means will not prevail, may maintain the Safety and Welfare of their Kingdoms by armed Violence. What the Law is to private Persons, that the Sword is to publick Governours, the

the only Weapon to defend their Rights, and decide those Controversies that cannot be try'd at any other Bar. In all such cases matters are refer'd to the Lord of Hosts, the Sovereign Protector of Princes, and they that are engag'd in them may lawfully kill without Murder. And therefore we read that when the Soldiers came to *John the Baptist* for Instruction in their Duty, he did not bid them lay down their Arms, or fight no more for their Prince, but only will'd them *to do no violence in any private Quarrels, to accuse no man falsely, and to be content with their Wages,* Luke 3. 14.

3. Private Persons in their own necessary Defence may likewise kill without any Breach of this Commandment: for God hath given to every Man a Right to defend his Life against all unjust and inevitable Violence; and consequently where any is suddenly or secretly assaulted without any visible means of escaping, he may safely take away another's Life to secure his own. Indeed where the danger is not so sudden or imminent, but recourse may be had to the Magistrate for Protection, there the matter must be respited, and left to him who is God's Minister for this purpose; but where there is no time for this, every man is a Magistrate to himself, to vindicate his own Cause, and to preserve his own Life, tho' with the loss of another's. Hence God Almighty allows the killing of a Thief or Housebreaker, who sets upon us unawares, and leaves no other way to prevent or redress the Injury, *Exod. 22. 2, 3.* This is agreeable not only to the Law of God, but to the Law of Nature and Reason, and is accordingly allow'd by the Laws of all Countries. So that all sorts of killing come not within the Meaning and Prohibition of this Law; for both the Magistrate in the Execution of Justice, the Soldier in a lawful War, and every private Person in his own necessary Defence, may take away another's Life, and be guiltless.

Beside which, there is another sort of killing, that is purely accidental, and without any Intention, which is not concern'd in the Design or Meaning of this Precept; this is in the Law call'd Manslaughter: an Instance whereof we have in Holy Scripture of one who *fetching a stroke with his Axe in hewing of Wood,* had the ill luck *to have the Head of it fall off from the Helve, and to slay his Neighbour unawares,* Deut. 19. 5. This being perfectly casual, and beside the Intention, we find excus'd by God himself, who appointed Cities of Refuge for such innocent Manslayers to fly
K k k unto,

unto, to be safe from the Avenger of Blood, as we read in that Chapter.

But what then is the Killing here forbidden in this Commandment?

In answer to which I say, first in general, that all voluntary Murder or shedding of Blood, without sufficient Warrant and Authority from God, is the thing forbidden in this Law; yea, all secret Designs and Intentions of taking away Life in this way, are punishable by God's Law, tho they may escape the Censure of earthly Tribunals: for they that are guilty of them take God's work out of his hand, and will needs execute that Vengeance which alone belongs to him. More particularly, the Killing here condemn'd is of two sorts; the killing of a Man's self, and the killing of any other.

1. I say, the killing of a Man's self stands here condemn'd as the grossest of all Murder: This is an unnatural Crime, and were it not for some Examples we have of it in Scripture, and more in the Experience of the World, one would wonder how any should be induc'd to commit it; for this is contrary to the Law of Self-preservation, which is planted in the Natures of all Creatures, and directly opposes all the Principles of Reason and Religion. I know some Philosophers have commended and advis'd to it as a piece of Gallantry, to rid themselves of those troubles, which others live to complain of: whereas it betrays much more of Cowardice than Courage, to shrink from those Evils which they should encounter, and lightly to sink under that burden, which it behoves them manfully to bear; besides, 'tis a high Usurpation upon God's Prerogative, who has not put our Lives in our own power, but reserv'd to himself the disposal of them: so that we cannot without great Injustice done to him, dispose of them as we please. Yea, Self-murder is an Affront not only to the Power, but the Providence of God; for it implies a great Dissatisfaction in his present Dealings, and an utter Distrust of his Goodness for the future.

Moreover, this Sin is a manifest Injury to our Friends and Country, who claim a just share in us; for we are not born for our selves only, but for the Benefit and Comfort of others: and therefore no Man can make himself away without apparent wrong to those, who have a Right to his Service and Assistance.

But above all, Self-murder brings an irreparable damage to a Man's self, for it leaves no room for Repentance, but being taken away

away in the very Act of sinning, excludes him from all hopes of Mercy and Pardon, and so proves at once the Destruction of Body and Soul.

2. All wilful Murder, or taking away the Life of another Person, is directly forbidden in this Commandment; and according to the different Degrees and Quality of the Persons to whom such Violence is offer'd, does the Guilt of this Sin increase. And therefore,

1. All King-killing or treasonable Conspiracies against the Lives of Princes is the highest Degree of Murder; for since the Commonwealth lives and breathes in them, and their Welfare is the common Safety, to design against them, is to assault the whole, and undermine the Peace and Welfare of Mankind: for which reason the Persons of Princes have been ever esteem'd sacred and inviolable, and to assault them is like cutting off the Head, which is evermore fatal to the whole Body. To fight against lawful Powers is without any Commission from God, who hath made Kings supreme in their Dominions, and consequently not to be over-rul'd or resisted by those that are subjected to them. Hence we read of our Blessed Saviour, that tho he were able to scatter all the Powers upon earth, yet he never offer'd the least Resistance to the Secular Powers; and when St. Peter drew his Sword in one of the justest Causes as might be thought, even the Defence of his Saviour, he receiv'd a check for his mistaken Zeal, and was bid to put up his Sword with this Rebuke, *He that thus useth the Sword, shall perish by the Sword.* And as the killing of Kings, so likewise of any other private Person, is the Murder prohibited by this Law. And therefore,

2. All Duels or private Decisions of mens Quarrels by the Sword are forbidden by this Commandment; for this is a wresting the Sword of Justice out of those hands in which God hath put it, and taking it without any warrant into our own. God Almighty, who hath the sole Power of Life and Death, hath authoriz'd Magistrates to execute wrath upon him that doth evil, but no private Person hath any such Grant or Authority over the Life of any other: so that what is Justice in the one, is Murder in the other. Yea, this is wresting Vengeance out of God's hands, who claims it as his due, and not to be invaded by another: *For Vengeance is mine (saith he) and I will repay.* So that to vindicate our Quarrels with our own hands, is not only to distrust the Power and Goodness of God, but to usurp upon his

Prerogative; and tho the Vindication of Mens Honour is the usual Plea for these Barbarities, yet there is scarce any thing that more reflects upon the Honour of God, or more impairs their own.

In short, all voluntary taking away our Neighbour's Life, either by open Violence, or secret Contrivance, whether it be immediately by our selves, or by instigating, advising or encouraging of others, or any way becoming instrumental and accessory thereto, is the Sin prohibited in this Precept; the great Evil and Danger whereof will be evident to any that will consider,

1. The great Indignity that is hereby offer'd to our Maker, who as he is the sole Giver, so he is the sole Disposer of all Mens Lives; and therefore to take away Life without his Consent, and against his Will, is to rob God of his Right over his Creatures, to take away his Power of Life and Death, and to usurp upon the Tribunal of Heaven. Moreover, God having made Man in his own Image, to murder any is to destroy his Image, yea to murder him in Effigy, which is the highest piece of Contempt that can be offer'd him. Again,

2. Murder is a high piece of Injustice to the Publick; for it robs the King of a Subject, and the Country of a Member, that might be serviceable to both.

Lastly, 'Tis an unspeakable Injury to the Party himself, who is hereby depriv'd of the dearest and most invaluable Blessing, his Life, with all the Comforts and Advantages of it: yea, the murder'd Person is rob'd not only of his temporal Life, but is extremely hazarded as to his future and eternal State; for he is cut short of his Time for Repentance, and may perhaps lose his Opportunity of making Peace with God; which is an irreparable Injury, for which no sufficient Amends or Satisfaction can be made.

And as the Sin of Murder is thus unexpressibly great, so is the Guilt and Danger of it no less; for 'tis a crying Sin, that calls loudly for Vengeance, and seldom or never misses of it. It brings a Stain and Pollution upon a whole Country, where 'tis committed, which is not to be wash'd out but by the Blood of the Murderer.

In short then, all Invasion upon the Life or Person of our Neighbour is the great Sin here forbidden. But because our blessed Saviour, in expounding this Commandment, hath extended

it to the prohibiting all the Degrees, Motives and Occasions of this Evil, 'twill be requisite briefly to consider some of the chief of them. And,

1. All maiming, wounding, or any ways impairing the Life or Limbs of another, are forbidden by this Law ; for this is a degree of Murder, and often leads to it : and tho it do not always take away Life, yet it destroys all the Comfort of it, and renders it many times more burdensom and less desirable than Death it self ; and therefore we are charg'd to *do Violence to no Man*, nor to hurt any in Body, Goods or Name.

2. All rash, causeless and immoderate Anger stands here condemn'd as a frequent occasion of this Evil ; for so our Saviour tells us, *Mat. 5. 21, 22.* and sad Experience informs us of many Quarrels that begin with Anger, and end in Slaughter : not that all Anger is sinful, for we are bid to be *angry and sin not* ; but only when 'tis inordinate, that is, when we are angry without a Cause, when we suffer our Passion to run too high, or to continue too long ; then doth it transport us beyond the bounds of Meekness and Decency, and hurry us on to all the Acts of Outrage and Violence.

3. All reproachful and contumelious Language falls under the prohibition of this Law ; for this often stirs up Wrath, and is a frequent occasion of Duels and Bloodshed : and therefore our Saviour cautions us against saying to our Brother *Racha*, which signifies a vain empty Fellow ; and much more against calling him *Fool*, which will bring us in danger of the Judgment, for the many Evils that ensue from such detracting and opprobrious Language, which often engenders Strife, and draws on Murder and Blood ; and if, as our Saviour tells us, we are to give an account of every idle word that does no good, how much more are we to reckon for such pernicious and provoking Words, as occasion so much harm ?

Lastly, all Envy, Hatred and Malice are things prohibited in this Precept, for these we all know are great occasions of Murder and Cruelty. *Cain* out of Envy *slew his Brother Abel*, because his own Works were Evil, and his Brother's Righteous, 1 John 3. 12. *Out of the Heart* (saith our Saviour) *proceed evil Thoughts, Murders, &c.* Mat. 19. Where Malice and Hatred are harbour'd in the Heart, there Murder and all sorts of Villany break out in the Hand ; for these beget those secret Grudges, Spite and Animosity that fire Mens Spirits, and make them study nothing but

Mischief

Mischief and Revenge; for which reason St. John declares, that *he that hateth his Brother is a Murderer*, 1 John 3. 15.

Thus I have briefly shew'd what is forbidden in this Commandment, to wit, all kind of Violence offer'd to the Person of any, more especially the taking away of Life by Murder, Assassination, Poison, or any other unlawful means, together with all the Motives and Inducements leading thereunto: All which we are here requir'd carefully to avoid. And because we daily meet with many occasions of Anger and Animosity, that may tempt to these Enormitys, we are to *abstain from all appearance of Evil, and watch and pray that we enter not into Temptation.*

DISCOURSE XV.

Exod. 20. 13. *Thou shalt not kill.*

THE Design of this Precept (as I shew'd in my last) is to secure Men in their Lives and Limbs, and to guard their Persons from all kind of Violence. But because the negative Precept always includes an affirmative Duty, I proceed now to what is requir'd in this Commandment, and that is, the Preservation of Life, and performing all good Offices tending thereunto.

And here, to omit the preservation of our own Lives, about which Nature it self ordinarily prompts Men to be sufficiently solicitous, I am to shew what Religion teaches us to do for the preservation of others. 'Tis a great mistake to think or say with *Cain*, that we are not *our Brothers Keepers*, and that we may cast off all Care and Concern for others Welfare; for God has made us sociable Creatures, and plac'd us in a condition of mutual need and dependence, that we may be mindful of and helpful to one another. To which end he cautions us against that narrow contracted Spirit, that confines all our Care at home, whereby Men become *Lovers of themselves*, and only seek their own; whereas Religion tends to enlarge Mens Hearts, and to make others the Object of their Concern and Care: for the Precepts of the Second Table require us to *love our Neighbour as our selves*; and the Apostle directs, *As we have Opportunity to do good unto all Men*, Gal. 6. 10.

Now

Now because the preservation of Mens Lives, and the Comfort of them, depends very much upon the practice of some Christian Vertues necessary to that end, it will be requisite to explain and treat of them as things requir'd in this Commandment. And here the

First and great thing requir'd to this end, is the Vertue of Humanity. This is that Benevolence or *Good-will towards Men* implanted in our Natures by God himself, and proclaim'd by the Angels at the Birth of our Saviour, whereby we are or should be inclin'd to wish well to Mankind, and instead of impairing the Life or Health of any, to do all the Service and good Offices we can to both.

To this we stand oblig'd by that common Nature whereof we are all Partakers, which being the same in all, is every where to be lov'd and regarded by us; for our Neighbour is but our self multiply'd and enlarg'd, the same Substance diffus'd and communicated to another Person: so that when we help our Brother, we are but kind to our selves, and only cherish our own Flesh. The meanest Person is equally descended with our selves, he hath the same Father in Heaven, and derives his Pedegree from the same earthly Parents; for *Adam* is the Father of us all, and *Eve* the Mother of all living: yea God hath stamp'd his own Image on all Men, which is therefore to be respected in all, and not to be misus'd in any. Hence we find Murder condemn'd as an Affront offer'd to God, and a Violation of his Image, *Gen. 9. 6.*

But what Influence has this Vertue of Humanity upon the preserving of Life? Why, great sundry ways. For,

(1.) It prevents all those Evils that are injurious to one another's Welfare; it keeps Men from all kind of Violence and Cruelty, and is so far from doing, that it thinketh no Evil to any Man. And not only so, but

(2.) It puts Men upon the practice of those things that tend to promote each other's good; it makes Men love their Neighbours as themselves, and do to all Men as they would be done by: yea it begets a Sympathy in Mens Nature, enclining them to share in one another's Joys and Sorrows, bearing and easing one another's Burden; and where that is, no harm can be done to the Lives or Persons of any: and therefore this Vertue is here requir'd for the Security of both.

2. Meekness is another great help and preservative of human Life, and therefore requir'd in this Commandment. This is that Vertue

Vertue that restrains Mens Passions, and keeps them from the Impatiences of Anger, which are so uneasy both to themselves and others. What doleful Evils proceed from wild and ungovern'd Passions, daily Experience may inform us: What Rancour and Malice they create in the Mind; what bitter and reviling Language they draw from the Mouth; what Violence and Bloodshed they occasion by the Hand, are Matters too well known to need any Proof. Indeed nothing is more injurious to Mens Lives and Persons than unbridled Passions, which hurry them on headlong into the greatest Mischiefs.

Now Meekness is the Grace that calms these boisterous Passions, allays the Storms of the Mind, and preserves it from the bad Effects of Rage and Impatience. For this reason we have many Precepts and Exhortations in Scripture to this Vertue; St. Paul wills us to be *meek and patient towards all Men, to put away all Bitterness and Wrath, all Clamour and Evil-speaking, with all Malice*, Eph. 4. 31. *to be strengthen'd with all might unto all Patience and Long-suffering*, Col. 1. 11. To give way to Wrath, is to give place to the Devil, and that will lead to all Outrage and Villany; but to subdue our Passions, is to resist the Devil, and to give the Tempter no power over us: by this we quench the Sparks before they break into a Flame, and put a stop to the beginnings of Evil. In a word, this excellent Vertue serves to prevent all the Murder and Mischief forbidden in this Commandment, and therefore the Practice of it must be here requir'd for the preservation of our Lives and Limbs.

3. Peaceableness is another thing requir'd to this end: This is a Vertue near akin to and proceeding from the former; for Meekness and Gentleness of Spirit naturally leads to Peace, and the subduing of the Passions conduceth much not only to the inward quiet of our own Minds, but to the living peaceably with one another. And because the Safety of Mens Lives and Persons depends very much upon the practice of this Vertue, the Apostle in sundry places earnestly exhorts to it, as a good means to preserve them: *If it be possible (saith he) as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men*, Rom. 12. 18. And elsewhere, *Follow Peace with all men, without which no man shall see the Lord*. This quiet and peaceable Disposition tends to prevent those Quarrels that molest the World, and prove so fatal to Mankind, and is therefore a great Guard and Security to Mens Lives. There is indeed in some Men a certain peevishness and perverseness

ness of Spirit, that makes them delight in Brawls and Contention; they take a secret pleasure in raising Commotions in the State, Contentions in Familys, and Differences among Neighbours; which have many times a very bad Influence upon the whole, and end in Slaughter and Destruction. Such turbulent and unquiet Spirits are the Pests and Troublers of the World, that plague the Neighbourhood where they live, and involve Countrys in Blood and Confusion; yea such Incendiarys as these are the very Imps of Satan, and do the Works of the Devil, who was a Murderer from the Beginning, and the Father of them.

Now to prevent these Evils, we are to root out of our Minds all Inclinations to Discord and Contention, and labour for such a sedate and peaceable frame of Spirit, as may dispose us to love and live easily by one another. This Reason, as well as Religion, teaches us; and being necessary to the preservation and comfort of each other's Lives, must be look'd upon as requir'd in this Commandment.

4. Another Duty enjoin'd by this Precept, is that of Charity and giving of Alms; which is so necessary to the support and sustaining of Life in cases of want, that many without relief would perish and sink under them: and therefore we find many strict Injunctions to this excellent Vertue, *Give Alms of such things as ye possess*, Luke 11. 41. *Above all things put on Charity, which is the Bond of Perfectness*, Col. 3. 14. Now Charity relates both to the Souls and Bodies of our Neighbours, both which are necessary to the Support and Comfort of human Life; and because the Wants and Necessitys of Mankind are various, the Acts of Charity must be so too. As,

(1.) To feed the Hungry, and to afford them at least so much of Sustenance, as to keep them from Starving.

(2.) To give drink to the Thirsty, that they may not pine away with Dearth, or perish for lack of Moisture.

(3.) To clothe the Naked, to keep them from the Injuries of the Weather, and to preserve them from the fatal Evils of Cold and Nakedness.

(4.) To entertain Strangers, that they may not be left harbourless, or perish for want of necessary and convenient Reception.

(5.) To redeem Captives, and to succour and enlarge Prisoners, that they may not languish under the Pressures of Durance and Captivity.

(6.) To visit the Sick, to assist them with our Counsel and our Prayers, and to do all other good Offices as their Necessities shall require.

Lastly, To find Employment for mean and indigent Persons, who are to live by their Labour, and to assist them in placing out their Children in honest Trades and Callings: These, and the like Acts of Charity, are so necessary to the preserving of human Life here, and the procuring of eternal Life hereafter, that we are to look upon them as enjoin'd in this Commandment.

How much these things conduce to the preserving of human Life, is obvious to any that considers the several Wants and Necessities of Mankind; for how many would starve with Hunger, and perish with Thirst, if not reliev'd by these Acts of Charity? How many would die with Cold and Nakedness, if not cloth'd and arm'd against them? Would not some be left harbourless, and perish for lack of Necessaries, if they were not receiv'd into Houses, and supported under some unavoidable Accidents? How many would languish under hard Bondage, and pine away in Prisons and Durance, if they were not succour'd under those Calamities? What would become of the Lives and Families of many Persons, if they were not employ'd and assisted in their Labours by those that are enabled to do it? In a word,

To perform these Acts and Offices of Charity, is in the Scripture-sense to save Life; and to neglect them, is to lose and destroy it, the things requir'd and forbidden in this Commandment.

But I may not pass over this weighty Duty, without advising and stirring up to the Practice of it. To which end consider,

(1.) That as there is no one Precept more press'd and recommended to us, than this of Charity; so there is none, wherein our Saviour has set forth himself as a higher Example: for *he went up and down doing good*, both to the Souls and Bodies of Men, and would have his Followers imitate him in nothing more than in the Acts of Mercy and Charity.

(2.) The Principles of Nature and Reason prompt us to be helpful to one another; for God has planted in us a Love to Mankind, and plac'd us in a mutual need and dependence on each other: so that every one may take their turns of asking and receiving another's Bounty; and to withhold it in cases of necessity, is barbarous and inhumane.

(3.) The Principles of Gratitude exact this from us, to communicate to each others Necessities; for 'tis from the Divine Bounty

ty that we receive all we have, and Gratitude requires some returns to be made to the Owner and Bestower of it: And because *our Goodness extendeth not to him*, he hath order'd it to be paid to such as need our Assistance, whom he has made his Proxys and Receivers. To which we may add,

(4.) That 'tis a noble and divine thing to preserve Life, and to rescue the Poor from Misery; for this is to resemble God in Acts of Bounty and Beneficence to his Creatures, and to co-operate with our Maker in saving the Life he gives them.

Lastly, These Acts of Charity will redound to our temporal and eternal Advantages; for God is wont to multiply his Blessings here on such as exercise them, and will not fail to crown them with far greater Blessings hereafter. *He that giveth a Cup of cold Water to a needy Disciple, shall not miss of a Reward*; for Christ reckons that to be done to him, which is done to his poor Members. And Solomon tells us, *That all we give this way is lent to the Lord, and will be surely repaid with Interest*. In short,

The Works of Mercy and Charity will be the great things enquir'd into at the last day, and all Men shall receive their doom, according as they shall be found to have practis'd or neglected them. The Sentence of Absolution is, *Come ye Blessed, for I was Hungry and ye gave me Meat, &c.* the Sentence of Condemnation, *Go ye Cursed, for I was Thirsty and ye gave me no Drink, &c.* So that they who have supported the Lives of others, shall save their own; and they who have neglected it, shall lose them; for *such shall have judgment without Mercy, who have shew'd no Mercy*.

5. The last tho none of the least Vertues tending to the preservation of human Life, is the forgiving of Injurys, or being easily reconcil'd to those that do them. This is a Duty frequently urg'd and inculcated upon us in Holy Scripture: *Recompense to no man Evil for Evil; Dearly beloved, avenge not your selves, for Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord, Rom. 12. 17, 19. Put on as the Elect of God Bowels of Compassion, forbearing one another, and forgiving one another; if any Man have a quarrel against any, even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye, Col. 3. 13.* All which will us not to be easily mov'd or inflam'd at every Provocation, but to pass by lesser Trespasses and Offences: Not that we are to pass by all Injuries or Indignitys without any reparation, for this would make us a Butt for every one to shoot at, and instead of removing would encourage Men to multiply Wrongs

and Insolencies; but that we may not avenge our selves, or go about to repair Injuries with our own hands, for that occasions Duels and Slaughter, and is a Shedder of much Blood. To prevent which, we are to forgive small matters, and redress greater by a legal reparation: This is to *render unto God the things that are God's*, by leaving Vengeance to him to whom it belongs, and is many times a better way of repairing Injuries than revenging them.

How much this tends to the quiet and preservation of Mens Lives, is obvious to any that considers how many Quarrels and Differences are hereby prevented, and how it preserves from all the disquieting Evils and Dangers of Revenge; for which reason Solomon declares it to be not only the Safety, but the *Glory of a Man to pass by an Offence*.

Thus we see shedding of Blood to be the great Sin prohibited in this Law, which is so heinous an Evil in God's sight, that he declares he will not only *demand the Life of Man at the hands of Men, but of Beasts too*, Gen. 9. 5. *For if an Ox gor'd a Man that he died, the Ox it self was to be slain, and the Flesh thereof to be cast away as an Abomination*, Exod. 21. 28, 29: which should stir up in us a just abhorrence of this vile and detestable Crime.

And as we are to abstain from all the degrees and occasions of Murder, so are we to use all good means for the preserving our own Lives, and the Lives of others.

DISCOURSE XVI.

Exod. 20. 14. *Thou shalt not commit Adultery.*

HAVING shew'd the great care taken in the sixth Commandment for the security of Mens Lives, I proceed now to the Seventh, which helps to secure them in the quiet possession and enjoyment of their Wives. The former considers them in a single capacity, and provides for the safety of their Persons from all kind of Violence; the latter in a double and conjugal State, and keeps them from the Violation of the Bonds of Wedlock. This is contain'd in these words, *Thou shalt not commit Adultery*.

This Precept being likewise Negative, I am to shew,

First,

First, What is forbidden; and next, what is requir'd in it.
For the

First, The thing prohibited in this Precept is all manner of Uncleanneſs and fleſhly Luſts, together with all the Occaſions, Temptations and Tendencys thereunto; and becauſe Adultery is the worſt or fouleſt of all fleſhly Luſts, 'tis therefore mention'd in the firſt place, and is here ſet to ſignify all the reſt. Now by Adultery here we are to underſtand,

1. And chiefly, The Incontinence of marry'd Perſons, or the Violation of the Bond of Wedlock; and this is committed when either or both of the Parties (as it too often happens) break thoſe mutual Engagements and Endearments that are peculiar to that State, and defile themſelves with ſtrange Fleſh. He that attempts the Affection or Chaſtity of his Neighbour's Wife, or invades the Encloſures which upon many accounts are appropriated to him, is truly and properly an Adulterer; and ſhe that complies with ſuch unchaſt Motions, and yields to the leud Embraces of another, is truly an Adultereſs: Both which grievouſly offend againſt God, their Neighbour, and themſelves.

(1.) 'Tis, as *Joſeph* expreſſes it, *a great Wickedneſs committed againſt God*, Gen. 39. 9. for 'tis the Violation of a divine Ordinance, dignify'd with many Marks of Reſpect and Sanctity, and the prostituting a ſacred and ſolemn Myſtery to vile and ſinful Purpoſes. Moreover,

(2.) This is a great Injury and Offence againſt our Neighbour; for he is hereby wounded in the moſt ſenſible and tender part, wherein the Comfort of his Life, and the Content of his Mind are moſt nearly concern'd: he is hereby rob'd of what he eſteems the moſt dear and precious to him, the Love, Honour and Fidelity of his Wife, which perverts all the ends of Marriage, and renders what was deſign'd for the Comfort, only the Plague and Miſery of human Life. He is injur'd in his Eſtate and Family, by thruſting a ſpurious Brood into it to be maintain'd by his Care and Industry, and depriving the lawful Iſſue of what might otherwiſe come to them. Again,

(3.) This is an Evil or Offence againſt the Perſons themſelves that commit it; for it robs them of their Credit, their Innocence, the Peace of their own Mind, and the Bleſſing of God, and too often puts them in a way of Wickedneſs, from whence they never return: ſo that this Sin at once defiles two Bodys, and deſtroys

It roys two Souls. Other Sinners (as one has observ'd) may perish singly without the Guilt of another's Damnation; the Swearer damns none by his Oaths but himself; the Drunkard by his Intemperance only drowns his own Soul: these and other Sinners require no Partnership in their Guilt, for they may be solitarily wicked, and perish alone; but this Sin of Adultery requires Partners in the Commission of it, and involves both in the same Condemnation. Yea,

This Sin is not only a private, but a publick Injury to human Society; for beside that it corrupts Mens Manners, and infects by Debauchery, it fills the World with a spurious Brood, and spoils the Race of Mankind. We find God Almighty appointed the Enclosures of Marriage, to preserve a holy Seed; for he so far abhor'd a false Brood, that he would not suffer a *Bastard to enter the Congregation to the tenth Generation*, as we read Deut. 23. 2.

In short, Adultery is a high Dishonour to God, and a Violation of the most solemn Vows and Engagements. 'Tis an irreparable Injury to Men, for it fills the World with Jealousys, and destroys the Peace and Happiness of Mankind: which will lead me from the Guilt to consider the Danger of this Sin.

And here the Punishment assign'd to this Evil is very great, both here and hereafter: The temporal Punishment appointed for it in the Old Law was no less than Death, as we read Lev. 20. 10. *The Man that committeth Adultery with his Neighbour's Wife, both the Adulterer and the Adulteress shall surely be put to Death*: and the same is repeated, Deut. 22. 22. And indeed the relaxing this Punishment hath let loose the Reins to Mens beastly Lusts and Appetites, which have prevail'd in these latter Ages to the great Reproach and Scandal of Christianity; such Monsters of Wickedness having risen up, as have boasted of their Leudness, glorying in their Shame, and priding themselves in the Follies of a filthy and debauch'd Conversation. But let such vile Miscreants know, that *God will not be mock'd*; and however they may, by the secret contrivance of their Wickedness, or the Prevalency of Vice, avoid earthly Punishments, they shall never escape the Judgment of God; for *Whoremongers and Adulterers God will judg*, Heb. 13. 4.

But tho Adultery be the great Sin particularly nam'd and prohibited in this Precept, yet there are many Abominations of the same kind compris'd and condemn'd under it. As,

1. Poly-

1. Polygamy, or the having more Wives than one, comes under the Sin of Adultery; it being a defiling of the Marriage-Bed, and running after strange Flesh. And tho this leud Practice has been allow'd among Turks and Infidels, yet hath it ever been condemn'd by the Laws of all Christian and civiliz'd Countryes.

Now the Sinfulness hereof may easily appear from the first Institution of Marriage, in which God made but one Woman for one Man; and then putting them together, declar'd, that *they twain should be one Flesh*: which shews the Intention of God Almighty was to join one to one, and no more; for by adding another, they can neither *be twain*, nor *one Flesh*; the assuming a third increasing the Number, and dividing the Unity of Marriage. Moreover, the Law that requires the *leaving Father and Mother, and cleaving to a Wife*, necessarily implies the cleaving of one to one; for the addition of more must take off from the former, and unavoidably cause a Separation. Hence we find the Prophet *Malachi* thus reasoning with the Jews, *Did he not make one?* that is, one Male and one Female, and *yet had he the residue of the Spirit*, Mal. 2. 15. that is, he wanted not power to make more if he had thought it fit, but he thus pair'd them at first to prevent a Plurality, and to keep them from a multiplication of Wives ever after. But the Prophet goes on, *Why did he make one?* And answers it, *That he might seek a godly Seed*; meaning, that he combin'd two into one by this sacred Knot, to preserve a holy Seed, and to people the World with a lawful Issue: *Wherefore* (as he concludes) *let every one take heed that he deal not treacherously with the Wife of his Youth*, by assuming another into his Bed, and abusing her by any unchast Embraces; which thing God himself had positively forbidden, Lev. 18. 18. *Thou shalt not take a Wife to her Sister, to vex her or uncover her Nakedness*; meaning, that they should not add one Wife to another, to vex and molest the first whom they promis'd to love and cherish.

As for what is alledg'd of the many Wives of the Patriarchs; that was either an Indulgence granted in the beginning of the World for the peopling of it, or else must be reckon'd among the failings of those good Men, which are not to be excus'd or imitated. In the New Testament we find our Saviour blaming the Jews for the liberty they took in the matters of Polygamy and Divorce; to rectify which, he sends them to the first Institution of Marriage, and tells them, that *in the beginning it was not so*, declaring it to be *Adultery to put away a Wife and marry another*;

another ; and therefore it must be more so, whilst they have one, to take another, which must be attended with those Brawls, Heart-burnings and Confusion. that must destroy the Peace of Familys, and render it impossible for one House to hold them : for which reason the Apostle advises in the singular number, *Let every Man have his own Wife, and every Woman her own Husband.*

2. Concubinage is here compris'd and condemn'd under the Sin of Adultery ; which is the adding of a Concubine to a Wife, or in the modern Phrase, the keeping of a Miss. This is indeed a Vice of an antient date, which hath been unhappily reviv'd and pleaded for by the Debauchees of latter Ages, tho it be contrary likewise to the first Institution of Marriage, which was the joining of one to one, to whom they were so to cleave, as to become but one Flesh ; whereas Concubinage mars this Unity, and breaks down all the Enclosures of Wedlock, for 'tis a cleaving not to one but many, and divides the one Flesh into more, yea 'tis contrary to all the ends of Marriage. For,

(1.) It contradicts that great end of it, in propagating Mankind by a holy and legitimate Offspring ; whereas this fills the World with a spurious and adulterous Brood. Again,

(2.) It contradicts that end of it, which was for the mutual Help, Comfort and Society of one another ; whereas this destroys all conjugal Affection, and robs both Partys of the Assistance and Comfort they might have in each other : so that instead of a help they become a hindrance and abhorrence to one another, and fill the Family with Feuds and Contention. Moreover,

(3.) It thwarts that end of Marriage, whereby it was ordain'd as a Remedy against Sin, and to avoid Fornication ; whereas this Vice joins Fornication to Matrimony, and makes Men sin not only against the Remedy, but with it.

Lastly, This Sin is a manifest breach of all the Vows and Promises of Marriage, wherein both Parties solemnly engage to forsake all others, and to be true and faithful to each other as long as they both shall live.

3. Another Sin contain'd and condemn'd under Adultery, is the detestable Vice of Incest, which is the approaching to those that are too near of kin ; a Crime that defiles the holy State of Matrimony, and makes that which is in it self honourable, to become vile and abominable. If it be not against the Law of Nature, 'tis evidently against the Law of God, who hath expressly forbidden

Forbidden to approach to any that are near of kin, Lev. 18. 6. Besides which 'tis against all the Rules of Prudence and Decency, which makes it abhor'd both of God and Man. The transplanting of Seeds and Vegetables hath been observ'd by Husbandmen to produce the most kindly Increase, which is a direction even from Nature not to mingle the same Blood, or to draw nigh to such as are too nearly ally'd. What the prohibited Degrees are, both of Alliance and Consanguinity, is upon Record in the 18th Chapter of *Leviticus*; which being confirm'd by the Authority of God, as well as the Decency of the thing, have been adopted into the Laws and Canons of the Christian Church, which under the greatest Penalties hath condemn'd all such incestuous Mixtures. St. Paul commanded the incestuous *Corinthian* to be deliver'd up to Satan for the Punishment of the Flesh; that is, to be turn'd out of the Church by the Sentence of Excommunication; and to put away from among them that wicked Person: which shews the Heinousness and Scandal of this Vice, and how much it is to be shun'd and detested of all Christians. These are the Vices of a marry'd State prohibited in this Commandment.

Beside which, 4. under Adultery here is forbidden all Fornication, which is the Incontinence of single Persons; whereby they let loose the Reins to unbridled Lusts, and prostitute themselves to the vile Embraces of a Harlot. This tho not altogether so bad as the former, it being a greater fault to sin with and against the Remedy provided in this Case than without it; yet is a vile Enormity committed against the express Law and Will of God, who hath commanded to *flee Fornication and all youthful Lusts, and to walk not after the Flesh, but after the Spirit*: yea this Sin (as the Apostle tells us) is committed against our own Bodies, which instead of being kept holy unto the Lord, are stain'd and polluted with filthy Lusts; whereby we unhallow those Temples of the Holy Ghost, and make the Members of Christ become the Members of an Harlot.

5. Under Adultery here is forbidden all the inward Uncleaness and Impurity of the Mind, tho it never come into outward Act; for God, who is the Judg and Searcher of Hearts, loves Purity and Truth in the inward Parts: *How long* (saith he to the Inhabitants of *Jerusalem*) *shall vain Thoughts lodg within you?* These as much defile a Man in the Sight of God, as any external Uncleaness; for *he that lusteth after a Woman hath committed Adultery already in his Heart*, Mat. 5. 28.

M m m

6. Here

6. Here is forbidden all Lasciviousness or Wantonness of Behaviour, discover'd either by Gestures, Words or Actions: The lascivious Eye, which appears in amorous and wanton Glances, call'd by *St. Peter*, *Eyes full of Adultery*, 2 Pet. 2. 14. The lascivious Tongue, which is delighted in obscene and filthy Communication, call'd therefore a World of Iniquity, *James* 3. 6. The lascivious Ear, that greedily listens to and receives such vain Communication, call'd therefore the Inlet of Vanity. The lascivious Hand, that is exercis'd in leud Actions and Embraces, and is therefore said to be the *Instrument of Unrighteousness unto Sin*, Rom. 6. 13. All these being the Agents and Instruments of Adultery, are forbidden in this Commandment.

But because where any Sin is forbidden, there all the Motives, Occasions and Incentives to it are forbidden with it; 'twill be requisite to mention some of those Temptations that lead to the Commission of this great Evil. And,

1. Luxury, or an intemperate use of God's Creatures, is an Incentive to Lust, and a great occasion of the Evils here prohibited; for this adds Fuel to those impure Flames, and sets Men a burning in their Lusts one towards another. So we find God himself complaining of the *Israelites*, for abusing his Blessings to those wicked Purposes: *When I fed them to the full* (saith he) *they then committed Adultery, and assembled themselves by Troops in the Harlots Houses; they were as fed Horses, every one neighing after his Neighbour's Wife*, Jer. 5. 7, 8. And what the Prophet *Jeremy* here ascribes to full Feeding, the Prophet *Isaiab* affirms likewise of high Drinking, telling us of some *that rose early in the Morning to follow strong Drink, and sitting late at night till Wine inflame them*, Isa. 5. 11. meaning, that the immoderate use of God's Creatures enkindles the Flames of Lust, and leads to all manner of Leudness. *Solomon* likewise tells the same, *Prov.* 23. 31, 33. which is too well known in sad Experience to need any other proof.

2. Idleness is another great Inducement and Occasion of these Evils; for that exposes Men to all manner of Temptation, and carries them away with the stream of evil Counsel and bad Examples. Hence we read of *Sodom*, that *Pride, Fulness of Bread, and abundance of Idleness was in her*, Ezek. 16. 49. which the Prophet there assigns as the Cause of all the Evils both of Sin and Punishment that beset her. Besides these there are,

Lastly,

Lastly, many other Provocations to this Sin, as lascivious Dresses, embroider'd Hair, painting the Face, strange Apparel, lascivious Books and Pictures, leud Tales and Songs, and the like; all which being great Incentives to Lust, are to be look'd upon as prohibited in this Commandment: And the Apostle's Advice of *abstaining from all the Occasions and Appearances of Evil*, directs us carefully to watch against and avoid them.

DISCOURSE XVII.

Exod. 20. 14. *Thou shalt not commit Adultery.*

IN explaining the negative part of this Commandment, I shew'd the Incontinence both of married and single Persons, and likewise all Impurity of Body and Mind, together with the Motives, Occasions and Incentives thereunto to be forbidden in it: I come now to the affirmative part of it, and to consider the Dutys imply'd and requir'd in it.

And here the great thing enjoin'd by this Precept is Chastity, with all the good means and helps conducing thereunto. Now Chastity is a Vertue, that preserves the Purity of Soul and Body from the Pollution of fleshly Lusts: where first,

I stile it a *Vertue*, for so it has been ever justly accounted, and that both Moral and Theological. 'Tis a Moral Vertue, as taught by the Light of Nature, and practis'd by the wiser Heathens; and 'tis a Theological Vertue or divine Grace, as 'tis adopted into Christianity, and made a great Part and Duty of Religion. Moreover,

I stile it a Vertue, *that preserves the Purity of Body and Soul*; both which being liable to Defilement and Corruption, are purify'd and kept clean by this Vertue.

It preserves the Purity of the Body, by keeping it from all the outward Acts of Uncleaness, and making the Members of it, which by Leudness are only *Instruments of Sin*, to become the *Instruments of Righteousness unto Holiness*. It sets a guard upon the Eyes, and turns them away from beholding *Vanity*; it puts a Bridle upon the Tongue, that restrains it from all corrupt Communication, and keeps the Door of the Lips, that no Evil may enter

in or come forth thence; it sets a watch upon the Ear, that closes it against vain Discourse, and will not suffer it to listen to filthy Conversation; it guards the Hand, and keeps it from touching any unclean thing; yea it teaches us to *pluck out a right Eye, and cut off a right Hand*, rather than either should offend, it being *better to enter into Heaven maim'd*, than to go down whole and intire into Hell. Lastly, it guides the Feet into the ways of Purity, and keeps them from the Paths of Harlots, whose *House is the way to Hell, and whose Goings lead to the Chambers of Death*. Thus does Chastity preserve the Purity of the Body, by setting a Guard upon all the Senses, and securing all the Members of it.

It preserves the Purity of the Soul, not only by restraining the outward Acts, but by checking the internal Motions of Concupiscence; for it will not suffer vain Thoughts to lodg in the Mind, and much less to insinuate into the Affections, and least of all to form themselves into lustful Desires or Actions: It stifles the Sparks of Lust in the beginning, and that prevents their breaking out into a Flame. Thus does Chastity preserve the Purity of the Soul, by chasing away all evil Thoughts that would annoy and infect it; for which reason the Apostle exhorts all Christians to *abstain from fleshly Lusts, because they war against the Soul*. And this will lead to

The last thing in the Description of Chastity, which preserves the Purity of Body and Soul *from the Pollution of sinful Lusts*; for these if cherish'd and gratify'd mightily pollute both, and render them but so many Cages of Uncleanness. The indulging a carnal Appetite defiles the Beauty, and destroys the Strength of the Body; and not only so, but debases the Dignity, and decays the Glory of the Soul. In short, it defaces the Image of God in both, degrades from the Honour of Men, and sinks them beneath the Beast that perisheth: whereas Chastity is the best Preservative against all these Evils; for it maintains the Honour and Dignity of the Soul, and secures the Body from all Impurities; 'tis the best *Hyssop to keep us clean, makes us whiter than Snow*, and either prevents or purges away all the Defilement of Nature.

From this brief Description we may discern the Nature, Excellence and Usefulness of Chastity, which alone can help us to *live after the Spirit*, and to preserve the whole Man from the Danger and Defilements of the Flesh. This is what the Apostle stiles, *Possessing our Vessels in Sanctification and Honour*, 1 Thess. 4. 3, 4. meaning, the Vessels of our Bodies, which are to be kept pure
and

and clean from carnal Lusts, that they may be *Vessels of honor, fitted and prepar'd for our Master's use*; that is, to be the Mansions of his Holy Spirit, and the *Temples of the Holy Ghost*.

Now this excellent Vertue is to be observ'd and exercis'd thro the several States and Stages of human Life. According to which,

There is, 1. A Virginal Chastity, which appertains to single and unmarried Persons of both Sexes.

2. There is a Conjugal Chastity, which belongs to Persons in a married State and Condition.

3. There is a Vidual Chastity, which concerns Persons of both Sexes in a State of Widowhood. In all which Stations, which many run thro, some Acts of this Vertue are to be carefully practis'd. For the

1. In a Virginal or unmarried State, 'tis certainly the *Will of God that we abstain from Fornication, and learn to possess our Vessels in Sanctification and Honour, not in the Lusts of Concupiscence, like the Gentiles that know not God*. Virginity is a State of Purity, and therefore must not be stain'd or defil'd by any unlawful Imbraces; to which end it must be guarded with Modesty, adorn'd with Piety, and secur'd by the frequent Exercises of Religion, and the Fear of God. Some of the Fathers have stil'd this, *the Life of Angels*, and the *Condition of glorified Saints in Heaven*; others have recommended it as a great Help and Ornament of Religion, which from its greater freedom from Cares, affords greater Advantages and Opportunities of Devotion: Such therefore should use and improve the Conveniences of that State to those Ends, that they may be the better guarded against the Importunity of sensual Lusts, and the many Temptations that may assault them. And tho it be no Offence against the Purity of this Virgin State, to take a fit Opportunity of changing it for the honourable State of Matrimony; yet they must keep themselves pure and unstained till the Season offers; and, with *Job* in another case, wait with Patience and Purity *till the Change comes*: which will be more successful and happy, when *Men behold their chaste Conversation coupled with Fear*.

2. For Persons in a married State, there is a Conjugal Chastity incumbent upon them: And that consists,

(1.) In a strict observation of their Marriage-Vow and Covenant, in which they promis'd to *forsake all others, and keep only to each other whilst they both shall live*. Hereby both Parties stand solemnly engag'd.

engag'd not to suffer their Affections to stray from one another, nor to run after strange Flesh; but to confine their mutual Kindness within due bounds, and to be true and faithful to each other to their lives end.

(2.) In such a moderate use of lawful Pleasures, as may be most consistent with the Glory of God, and the Health and Comfort of one another: The Apostle wills them to *abstain by consent at some times, that they may the better give themselves to Prayer and Fasting*, 1 Cor. 7. 5. And ver. 29. He bids *those that have Wives, be sometimes as tho they had none*. And that because the time is short, and all sensual Pleasures will soon have an end; therefore he would not have us to be too fond or immoderate in the use of them, but to make all the transitory Delights of this Life serviceable to the more durable and desirable Joys of a better.

3. For those that are in a State of Widowhood, there is a Virtual Chastity that appertains to them, and this contains in it sundry Acts and Duties: As,

(1.) The paying all decent Offices and Solemnities due to the memory of the deceased Party, not forgetting them too soon, nor running too hastily into the Imbraces of another; for this betrays a coldness of Affection, and too great an unconcernedness for the loss of so near and dear a Relation: beside, the Apostle seems to charge such Widows with Lightness and Wantonness, 1 Tim. 5. 11. where he does not condemn all second Marriages, but a light, vain, and wanton running into them.

(2.) Widows from the sense of Mortality, which they have had in the loss of so tender a Part, should learn to wean themselves from the World, and rather prepare to follow the former, than fly too hastily into the Arms of another Consort; to which end they should not ruminate too much on past Pleasures, but consider present Sorrows, and labour to prevent future Troubles. The Apostle speaks of some Widows that are *Widows indeed*, 1 Tim. 5. 3. describing them afterwards by their *trusting in God, and continuing in Supplications and Prayers Day and Night*, ver. 5. giving themselves unto God, and supplying the desolateness of their Condition with fervent and frequent Devotion, whom he therefore counts worthy to be honour'd, lov'd and reliev'd.

Lastly, Widows should carefully preserve an exemplary and unspotted Chastity, behaving themselves with that decency and modesty which becomes Women fearing God.

Thus

Thus I have describ'd the Vertue of Chastity requir'd in this Commandment, with the severall Acts and Properties of it, and the severall States in which it is to be exercis'd.

But because where any Duty is injoin'd, there all the necessary Means and Helps are injoin'd with it: therefore 'twill be requisite to mind you of three or four Vertues, which are the necessary Helps and Preservatives of Chastity; and they are Diligence in our Calling, Temperance in Diet, Watchfulness, and Mortification in the whole Course of our Life.

1. Diligence in our Calling is here requir'd as a Preservative of Chastity: This prevents the Temptations of Lust, and makes us deaf to all solicitations thereunto. He that is diligently imploy'd in the Business of his Vocation, will not be at leisure to listen to Satan's Suggestions, nor be led away by the corrupt Inclinations of the Flesh: For the Mind, which cannot attend to many things at once, being still exercis'd in the Business of a Calling, will leave no room for Sin to creep in. Idleness indeed lays Men open to all Temptations, it tempts the Devil himself to tempt us; it in a manner invites to Sin, and makes us ready to yield to any Lust that assaults us: whereas a Mind that is constantly well imploy'd, cannot easily be imploy'd amiss, and Vice must come with great Force to overcome one that is arm'd with Business, and Courage to withstand it; for which reason we are often bid to mind the Affairs of our Vocation: *As the Lord hath called every one, so let him walk*, 1 Cor. 7. 17. *Not slothful in Business, but fervent in Spirit, serving the Lord*, Rom. 12. 11. This will be a Remedy against Sin, and fortify us against the Assaults of all fleshly Lusts.

2. Temperance in the use of God's Creatures is another Vertue requir'd in this Commandment, as a preservative of Chastity: For as the Fire goes out when the Fuel is withdrawn, so will the impure Flames of Lust be extinguish'd when we withhold that which feeds them: and therefore we are bid to use God's Creatures not to excess, for that is apt to heighten and inflame, but to the Ends and Purposes for which God appointed them: *When I fed them to the full (says God) they committed Adultery*, Jer. 5. 7, 8. Which made *Agar* pray against Fulness, *lest he should forget himself, and say, Who is the Lord?* Prov. 30. 9. *He that striveth for Mastery (says the Apostle) is temperate in all things*, 1 Cor. 9. He that will get the mastery of his Lusts, and conquer his Corruptions, must exercise the Vertue of Temperance,

perance, and abstain from all the Incentives to Uncleanneſs: this will ſtarve many a Vice, and quench the Fire that elſe will burn and conſume us. 'Twas our Saviour's Caution, *Take heed to your ſelves, that ye be not overcharg'd with Surfeiting and Drunkenneſs,* Luke 21. 34. and to avoid the Evils of Luſt and Lasciviousneſs, we muſt beware of running into any Exceſs of Riot.

3. Watchfulneſs is another great Safeguard and Preſervative of Chaſtity; for this arms us againſt all the Aſſaults of a carnal Appetite, and furniſhes us with ſufficient Force to repel them: They that keep a conſtant and ſtrict Guard, are more ſecure from the danger of an Enemy, than they that neglect their Watch, and caſt off the Thoughts and Fears of him. The vain and careleſs Perſon is eaſily betray'd and carry'd captive by every Temptation, he is under the command of Sin, and at the beck of every imperious Luſt; and therefore our Saviour charg'd all his Diſciples to *watch*: and leſt any ſhould forget or think themſelves exempted from it, he doubles the Charge, *What I ſay unto you, I ſay unto all, Watch.* And this is no more than is neceſſary, for the Fleſh is a home-bred Foe, that hath many ways to circumvent us; and as there are many things to tempt and ſollicite it without, ſo is it eaſily betray'd and ſeduc'd within: and therefore we cannot be too watchful againſt ſo cloſe an Enemy, that hath ſo many Wiles and Stratagems to betray us. And leſt all our Care ſhould be too little againſt this natural and inbred Foe, we are,

Laſtly, To call in the Aid and Aſſiſtance of God's Holy Spirit to help us in this Combate; for ſo our Saviour directs us, *Watch and pray, leſt ye enter into Temptation*: Let us bring this unclean Spirit to our Saviour, to be exorcis'd by him when it is too hard for us; and becauſe the Fleſh is too apt to rebel againſt the Spirit, let us add Fasting to Prayer, keeping under the Body, and bringing it in ſubjection to the Obedience of Chriſt; for this evil Spirit is not always to *be caſt out without Prayer and Fasting.*

Thus I have briefly ſhew'd you, both what is forbidden, and what is requir'd in this Commandment, that we may flee the one and follow the other.

The things here forbidden, we ſee, are all the foul and beaſtly Sins of Uncleanneſs, ſome of which are not to be nam'd, and much leſs to be found among Chriſtians; and all of them are ſo pernicious to the Peace and Welfare of Mankind, that wiſe Men may eaſily ſee ſufficient reaſon to loath and deteſt them:
for

for with what Baits or Allurements soever they may be presented to us, they are the bane both of Body and Soul, and do but plague when they seem to please us; they wound us in things that are most dear to us, bringing disgrace on the Name, ruin to the Estate, and rottenness in the Bones of them that practise them. In a word, they deprive Men of all Comfort here, and of all Peace and Happiness hereafter; for which reason *Solomon* truly said, *That he that committeth Adultery is void of Understanding*, Prov. 6. 32.

The thing here requir'd, is a pure and chaste Conversation, free from the Pollutions of the World, and hating the very Garments spotted with the Flesh; abstaining not only from the outward grosser Acts of Uncleaness, but from all inward and secret desires after them. The loveliness of which Vertue may be easily seen from the loathsomness of the contrary Vice; for whereas this at once defiles and destroys the Body and Soul, the other is the Ornament, Glory and Safeguard of both: and as Uncleaness tends to and prepares for Hell, the Habitation of evil unclean Spirits; so doth Chastity lead to and qualify for Heaven, the Mansion of Bliss and Purity.

DISCOURSE XVIII.

Exod. 20. 15. *Thou shalt not Steal.*

GOD Almighty having in the two foregoing Precepts guarded mens Lives from Murder, and their Wives from Adultery; in this he secures their Goods from Theft and Rapine, and ties up mens Hands from picking and stealing from one another, giving a particular Charge against it, and saying to every individual Person, *Thou shalt not Steal.*

In this Negative Precept we are again to consider, both what is condemn'd, and what is commanded by it.

In general; The thing forbidden in it, is all kind of Theft, or breaking in upon the Rights of another.

The thing commanded, is the permitting to all Men the quiet and undisturb'd possession of all that is justly theirs.

N n n

And

And here we must note, that this Precept is grounded upon Property, and supposes Men may, and actually have a peculiar Right in some things which they may properly call their own. This Property is founded upon Humane Laws, which allot to every Man his Portion; and where they are not contrary to, are confirm'd by the Laws of God: These are the Standard of mens Rights, and ought to be the Rule and Measure of determining them.

And as this Precept supposes Property, so does it expressly prohibit all violation of it, either by withholding from another what is justly due to him, or by taking from him what he is actually possessed of; both which are plain Theft and Stealing from him.

But to speak more particularly; the Stealing forbidden in this Commandment, is either Open, or Secret. Of the first kind are Robbery and Oppression; of the latter all private Pilfering, and Deceit in Trade: the former is Stealing by Force, the latter by Fraud; both which are direct breaches and violations of this Law.

1. Then, all Robberies and forcible Invasions of another's substance, either Money or Goods, are here plainly forbidden; this is stealing with a high Hand, and a brazen Forehead, adding Impudence to Theft, and is frequently attended with Violence and Bloodshed. 'Tis a Crime too well known and felt by sad Experience; to need any Description or Proof; the Highways abounding too much with such Monsters, who, like Factors for the Devil, go to and fro seeking whom they may devour, and like Beasts of Prey hunt after Game, and then retire to their Dens. Of this kind likewise is all Burglary and House-breaking, which molests and rifles mens Habitations, and is a manifest Invasion of all Right and Property: both which fly in the Face of this Commandment, and bid direct defiance to all the Laws of God and Man.

2. Another Sin here prohibited is Oppression or Extortion: This is stealing with Authority, or an avowed piece of Robbery, whereby Might (as we say) overcomes Right, and Power, which was given for Protection, is made an Instrument of Ruin: of this kind, are grinding the Faces of the Poor, withholding the Hire of the Laborer, perverting Justice by Bribes, extorting unjust Fees, and the like: all which are plain Theft, Men being rob'd of all that is either detain'd of their Due, or extorted from them with-

without Right; and tho this may be sometime done under a Colour of Law, yet that does not lessen, but rather aggravate the Oppression, by using that to the destroying of Property, which was design'd to defend it. These are the more open and publick ways of Stealing; beside which there are other more close and secret Methods of Theft, as private Pilfering, and deceit in Trade, which are likewise here forbidden.

1. I say, all secret Pilfering and Purloining from another is here condemn'd, whether it be of Mony or Goods, or any thing that is his: this is too common a Practice among many, to take away what they can from others; and if they can escape discovery, and keep out of the clutches of the Law, care not what wrong they do them, going off with the spoils of their Neighbour, and with the Adulterous Woman, wiping their Mouth, and saying they have done no Evil. To which end,

Some take the advantage of the Night, and at once act and hide their Theft under the Covert of Darknes.

Others take the opportunity of a Neighbour's absence to rifle and diminish his Substance.

Others again take the opportunity of Throngs and Crouds to Pilfer and Steal, which is the Practice of Pickpockets and Juglers.

Again, there is another sort that are exercis'd in receiving, concealing and vending stoln Goods, making Markets of their Neighbours, and receiving gain from what belongs not to them. These and many more are the Arts and Practices of the secret Thief, who gets his living not so much by the sweat of his Brow, as by the slight of his Hand.

2. All fraud and deceit in Trade is here compris'd as an Act of Stealing; this, as manag'd by too many, is a mystery of Iniquity, full of falshood and deceit, and has too many intrigues to be known or describ'd by any but those that use them. As,

(1.) Some defraud in the substance of the Commodity they deal in, selling one thing for another, as Water for Wine, Chaff for Wheat, and the like, of which we read *Isa. 1. 22.* and *Amos 8. 6.* This is but too common to put off false and counterfeit Ware, or such as are mingled and blended with other things; which is no better than plain Theft or Stealing: for he that by falsifying or disguising a Commodity skrews more than 'tis worth out of another's Pocket, does no better than pick it, and the Buyer is rob'd of all that is taken above the just value.

(2.) Others defraud in the qualities of the Goods they deal in; for tho the thing sold be true as to the kind and substance of what it was sold for, yet it may have many defects and bad qualities, which if not discover'd to, or discern'd by the Buyer, a great fraud or wrong may be done to him: therefore if any sell a Commodity for sound and good, which he knows to be faulty; or if he declare not the faults to the Buyer, and abate for them accordingly, he is a plain Cheat, for he makes him pay for something which he hath not, and buy those good Qualities that are not there, which is downright Theft or Stealing from our Neighbour.

(3.) Others again defraud in the quantity of the Goods they deal in, and that is done by false Weights and Measures, which is likewise no better than Stealing: for he that sells less than Weight, makes the Buyer pay for that which he hath not; and he that useth false Weights and Measures, withholds from another so much as the Weight and Measure falls short of the due Proportion; and therefore we find a strict Charge against it, *Deut. 25. 15, 16.* The Prophet *Amos* complains of some that *made the Ephah small, and the Shekel great, falsifying the ballance with deceit,* *Amos 8. 5.* And *Solomon* more than once tells us of *false Weights and Measures, that they are an Abomination to the Lord,* *Prov. 11. 1.*

(4.) Others defraud in the manner of uttering their Goods and Commodities, not only concealing their Faults, but extolling them above their worth, and commending them for those qualities that are not in them; taking advantage likewise of the ignorance, the necessities and the fondness of Chapmen, to put the Dice upon them, whereby they make them pay for their Follies, and sell the wants and infirmities of their Brethren; which is arrant Theft or Stealing.

3. All falsifying in Trusts, Bargains and Contracts are forbidden in this Commandment. He that is intrusted for another, robs him of all that of which he gives not a fair Account, or is dispos'd of contrary to his Interest or Will. So likewise all Bargains and Contracts transfer a right to the things promised and agreed to; and therefore to falsify or act contrary to them, is to deprive them of a just due, and consequently to steal from them.

But beside the foremention'd ways of Stealing, there is yet a worse kind of Theft than all these, forbidden in this Commandment, known by the name of Sacrilege, which is the robbing of
God,

God, or proving deceitful to our Maker. If you ask how this is done, God himself answers it, *Mal. 3. 8. Ye have robbed me in Tithes and Offerings*: This is a peculiar Right, which God who giveth all Things hath reserv'd to himself, and appropriated to the Maintenance of those that serve at the Altar; so that to falsify or detain any part of this, is to commit Robbery against God, and to steal from our Maker. How hainous and provoking a Sin this is, I shall not need to say; since God himself declares, that he will not only punish private Persons for this Sacrilege, but will curse whole Nations, and that with a double and deplorable Curse too, where it reigns, *Mal. 3. 9.*

Lastly, The last, tho none of the least Sins forbidden in this Commandment, is the Sin of Uncharitableness or withholding Alms from the Poor; for these are not barely a Gift, but a Debt due to the Indigent and Needy, by a Right transfer'd and settled on them by the great Proprietor and Landlord of the World; and to withhold it from them in cases of extreme want and unavoidable necessity, is one of the worst sorts of Stealing.

These are the main things condemn'd in this Commandment; and since by the former Rule, where any Sin is forbidden, there all the degrees, steps and occasions of it are forbidden with it, I must here consider some of the chief Occasions and Temptations to these enormous Evils. And here the

First and great cause of these Sins is an inordinate Love of the World, which the Apostle tells us *is the Root of all Evil*, and particularly of all that Fraud, Sacrilege and Injustice that is to be found in it: for Men that set their Hearts too much upon the World, care not how they come by it, and this will prompt them to break down all the Inclosures of Right, and to invade the Properties of one another.

2dly, Idleness is another great occasion of Stealing; for such as refuse to labor in some Calling to get an honest livelihood, will not fail to reach out their Hands in picking and stealing from others, and like the idle Drones will live upon the Labors of the more industrious Bees: and therefore as this Sin is forbidden in the preceding Commandment as an incentive to Lust and Debauchery, so is it condemn'd in this as an apparent cause of Theft and Robbery.

3dly, Discontent with our present Condition is another frequent occasion of Stealing; for they that are dissatisfy'd and uneasy in their own State, will be ready to mend it by the unjust methods.

methods of Rapine, Violence and Oppression, and as opportunity offers will help themselves by the spoils of their Neighbour.

Thus we see the several Acts of Injustice, or ways of stealing, forbidden in this Commandment, together with the Motives and Occasions of them; it remains that I shew something of the Evil and Danger of them, the better to dissuade and deter from them.

For the First, The Evil of them plainly appears in this, that they are a manifest Violation of the Laws of God and Man; for both of them have, by the strictest Precepts and Prohibitions, warn'd and caution'd us against them. Yea, they are contrary not only to the Rules of reveal'd Religion, but to the common Principles of Nature and Reason, which forbid any Wrong or Injury to be done to any, and not to do that to others, which we would not have done to our selves. Now there is none that would willingly have his House plunder'd, his Goods purloin'd, or his Property either openly or secretly invaded; and if we would but consider and act by that common dictate of Nature, of doing as we would be done by, we should soon see the sinfulness of all such Practices, and be sufficiently arm'd against all Temptations to them. Beside,

These Sins are destructive to the Peace and Welfare of Mankind; for they will not suffer Men to enjoy their own, or live quietly by one another, they deprive them of all the Comfort of their Labors, and defeat all the rewards of Industry: so that Thieves and Robbers are the pests of a Commonwealth, and the bane of all human Society. Then,

2dly, For the Danger, that is evident from the Punishments annex'd to these Offences both by divine and human Laws; the one making temporal, the other eternal Death the Reward of them: the craftiest Thief and the stoutest Robber are often caught in their own Snare, and they who drive a Trade in this wickedness seldom miss at last of the Reward of it.

But if any shall be so fortunate in these sinful Courses, as to escape earthly Punishments, he shall unavoidably fall under future and eternal Vengeance; for the Apostle assures us that God is the Avenger of these things, *1 Thes. 4. 6.* And this he doth,

Sometimes by scattering all such ill-gotten substance. Money gotten by Fraud and Oppression, like Quick-silver, slides through the Fingers of those that hold it fastest; and an invisible Hand takes away that which hath been unjustly taken from another:

so

to God himself threatens, *Hab. 2. 6, 7, 8.* *Wo be to him that increaseth that which is not his, that ladeth himself with thick Clay; for those shall rise that shall trouble him, and awake that shall vex him; because he hath spoiled others, the remnant of the People shall spoil him.* Moreover, sometimes God avenges these things by blasting the Comfort of what continues with them, and mingling a Curse with all that they possess: a little ill-gotten Goods like leaven leaveneth the whole Lump, diffusing it self and corrupting the whole Mass; this like a Moth or a Canker eats out the sweetness of what they have, and embitters all with the sting of an evil Conscience.

But beside secret Remorse within, this Sin is aveng'd with Shame and Ignominy from without, which renders them vile and odious in the sight of God and Man. The petty Thief is commonly branded and known from others by the marks of Infamy, which if they prevail not to their Reformation, lead to farther degrees of this Wickedness, which bring on Ruin and an untimely End: *For the bloody and deceitful Person shall not live out half his days,* *Psal. 55. 23.* and *Solomon* tells us, that *the Robbery of the wicked shall destroy them,* *Prov. 21. 7.* Thus is God the Avenger of these things here in this World: But the forest part of his Vengeance is reserv'd for hereafter, when the black Bill of all their Frauds and Injustice shall be brought in against them; when the cries of the Hireling and Labourer, oppress'd in their Wages, will enter into the Ears of the Lord of Hosts, and the rust of all ill-gotten substance witness against them: then will they receive the wages of their Unrighteousness, and be not only excluded from the Regions of Light and Glory, but doom'd, with the damned Crew of such Harpys, to the Dungeon of eternal Horror and Darknes.

Wherefore in the last place, let all Men beware of this Sin of Stealing, which is attended with so many doleful and unspeakable Evils; 'tis the Apostle's Advice, *Let no Man defraud or go beyond his Brother in any matter,* *1 Thes. 4. 5.* Do not disquiet thy Conscience with any unjust Gain, nor defile thy fingers with such filthy Lucre, remembering that whilst thou art overreaching thy Brother, Satan is all the while overreaching thee; and whilst thou art purloining another's Substance, the Devil is pursuing and running away with thy Soul, the loss of which is far more valuable than the Gain of the whole World.

DISCOURSE XIX.

Exod. 20. 15. *Thou shalt not Steal.*

I Discours'd the last time of the Negative part of this Commandment, and shew'd what was forbidden by it: I proceed now to the Positive part, to let you know what is commanded in it.

And here as the invading of any Man's Property by Force or Fraud, and depriving him of any thing that by the Blessing of God or his own Industry is justly his, is the thing condemn'd by this Law; so the preserving him in his Rights, and permitting every one quietly to possess and enjoy their own, is the thing requir'd and settl'd by it. And therefore,

The first and great thing enjoyn'd by this Commandment is Justice, Honesty and fair Dealing between Man and Man; and this consists not only in doing no wrong to any, but in doing right to all; this Vertue not barely restrains Men from withholding what is another's, but inclines them to give every one their just dues: To this we have many Precepts in Holy Scripture; *to have our Conversation honest among the Gentiles*, 1 Pet. 2. 12. *to render to all their Dues, Tribute to whom Tribute, Custom to whom Custom, Honor to whom Honor, owe no Man any thing but to love one another*, Rom. 13. 7, 8. There are some things due by the Law of God, *whose is the Earth and the fulness thereof*, and by whose Grant the Children of Men enjoy it; there are Dues likewise by the Laws of Men, which allot to every one their Portion, upon which foot generally stand the Rights of Mankind; and there are some Dues granted and confirm'd by both, as the tenth part of our Substance, which are the Portion of the Priests, by the Laws of God and Man: these are all to be strictly and inviolably observ'd, *rendering to Cesar the things that are Cesar's, and to God the things that are God's*. In a word,

Whatever Debts we have contracted, either by buying, borrowing, bargaining, or any other way engaging for our selves or others, must be justly and faithfully discharg'd, without diminution or delay; this is manifestly imply'd in this Commandment, which is grounded upon the fundamental Law of Equity, and is carefully to be kept to in all our dealings.

2dly,

2ly, Here is implied likewise the permitting to all Men the quiet enjoyment of all their Possessions, without depriving or disturbing them in any part of them : this is the Apostle's meaning, when he wills all Men *to live quiet and peaceable Lives in all Godliness and Honesty*; and elsewhere, *If it be possible, as much as lieth in them, to live peaceably with all Men*: the sense of which is, that we should molest no Man in his just Rights, nor any way lessen his Substance, but suffer every one to sit quietly under his own Vine, and peaceably reap the Fruits of it.

Now because the enjoining of any Duty contains in it all the necessary means and helps tending thereunto, we are to look upon those Vertues that are requisite to promote honesty, and quiet living by one another, to be enjoin'd with it. And they are these following.

1. Labor and Diligence in some Calling: This was requir'd in the foregoing Precept as a preservative of Chastity, and a necessary means to prevent Leudness and Debauchery, which Idleness unavoidably leads Men to; and the same is requir'd in this Commandment as a Preservative of Honesty, and a necessary means to prevent Poverty and Stealing, which Idleness exposes many to: *Let him that stole, steal no more* (saith the Apostle) and to that end advises to *labor, working with his Hands the thing that is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth*, Eph. 4. 28. They that will not put forth their Hands to work, do commonly reach them out to steal; whereas they that labor in an honest Calling, not only keep off Poverty from themselves, but are enabled to relieve the necessities of others. But because our Labor, without the divine Assistance, will be but a slender Relief either to our selves or others, here is requir'd,

2. Prayer unto God for his Blessing upon it, which alone can give it the desir'd Success; this will discover such a dependence upon God, and such a sense of his ability and readiness to help us, as will engage the divine Providence, and secure us from all the dangers and miseries of want: for *tho the Lions may lack, and suffer Hunger, yet they that fear the Lord shall want nothing that is good*, Psal. 34. 10. The true Reason that many do not prosper, is either that they cast off all due Care of their Affairs, or call not upon God for his Blessing upon them; and where these things are neglected, 'tis no wonder if they sink into want and poverty: for *'tis the Blessing of God that maketh Rich*, and preserves from the Temptations of Poverty; and 'tis Prayer alone that procures this Blessing, and protects from all the Evils and Dangers of it.

Hence we find *Agar* not only laboring but praying against Poverty, *Lest I be poor* (saith he) *and steal*, Prov. 30. 9. and desiring to be *fed with Food convenient for him*. And our Blessed Saviour, in his excellent Form, hath directed us to add Prayer to our Labors, and every Day to ask *our daily Bread*: Where tho we are directed to call and depend upon God for a Subsistence, yet we are no way encourag'd to pray for Abundance, to feed our Luxury, or spend upon our Lusts; but only to ask our daily Bread, and to be fed with Food convenient for us.

3. Another Vertue necessary to preserve Honesty and prevent Stealing, is contentedness with our Condition: for this will keep us from envying the Prosperity, or invading the Rights of other Men; whereas he that is not satisfied with his present State will never think that he hath enough, and that will tempt him to break in upon others, and to feather his Nest with the spoils of his Neighbour: and therefore the Apostle wills all Men *to be content with such things as they have*, without casting an evil Eye, or reaching out a purloining Hand after that which is another's: as for himself he tells us, that he had *learnt in whatever State he was, therewith to be content*; he *knew how to want*, and was thereby arm'd against the Temptations to Theft and Envy; and he *knew how to abound*, and was thereby enabled to avoid the abusing himself and God's Creatures by the evils of Luxury and Intemperance; and in every condition he had attain'd that Art of Contentment, as to be not only easy but thankful: which Lesson he recommends to us, and would have us learn from him, *Phil. 4. 11, 12.* not that we are restrain'd from bettering our Condition, where it may be honestly and fairly done, but that we do not use any foul or indirect Arts to compass it, by seeking to mend our selves by marring of others, or build our own Fortunes upon the Ruin of other Men.

But this Vertue of Contentment will fall in more properly under the tenth Commandment, where it shall be farther handled.

4. Here is requir'd the great Vertue of Charity to the Poor and Needy, which God the giver of all things hath made due to them; not indeed to the able, lusty and idle Beggar, who are to be made to labor, and get their own Bread, but to the aged, impotent and decrepit Poor, whom sickness or other unavoidable accident or necessity hath cast upon us: to these our Alms become a Debt, which as Justice requires to pay, so shall we be not only unjust, but unfaithful in detaining it. Lastly,

Lastly, Another great Duty requir'd in this Commandment is that of Restitution, the best Remedy and Expedient both against the Act and the Guilt of Stealing; which being of so great Consequence to the present Peace and future Happiness of our Souls, I shall briefly shew the nature, necessity and usefulness of this Vertue.

For the nature of Restitution, 'tis that Act of Justice which consists in repairing of Injuries, or making Satisfaction for the Wrong done to any. Where I stile it,

1. *An Act of Justice*, and so it is; for if Justice requires the rendring to all their due, then we may neither take, nor keep from another what is his. He that knowingly withholds any thing from the right Owner, is a Thief and a Robber; and as the first taking it away was an act of injustice, so is the keeping of it no less in every instant of the Possession: so that the same Justice that forbids the taking away any thing from our Neighbour, requires the restoring of it where any such thing is done, for which reason Restitution is reckon'd an act of Justice.

2. I stile it that act of Justice, which consists in *repairing Injuries and Wrongs*; for the clearing whereof, we are to observe in the act of Stealing,

1st, The Affront done to God, by breaking of his Law. And,

2dly, The Injury done to Man, by invading of his Property.

To the repairing of the first, Repentance is necessary, whereby alone we can obtain Pardon of God whom we have offended, and by Acts of Justice and Mercy atone for the Violation of his Laws.

To repair the latter, we must restore the thing taken away from another, or make him an equal and due Satisfaction; taking off all the Evil we have brought upon him, and not suffering any to groan under the burden of our Injustice, which is against all the rules of Equity and Charity.

But here it may be ask'd,

1. Who are they that are thus to make Restitution? To which the Answer is, all that have willingly wrong'd any Person, and either by force or fraud hurted his Neighbour; yea, not only they that have done this in their own Person, but all that have counsel'd, assisted, or any way promoted the doing of it, are likewise bound to Reparation: for these being all Actors and Abettors of the wrong, are to be Sharers in the Satisfaction. But,

2. Of what Things is this Restitution to be made? Why, of all that which of right belongs to another, and was unjustly taken or kept from him; all that is borrow'd or receiv'd of him must be return'd; all that is intrusted or committed to our Care must be accounted for: in a word, every thing of another's, that is in our keeping, whether by the lawful ways of Loan or Trust, or the unlawful ways of Fraud and Injustice, must be restor'd to him; if the thing be lost or perished, then the Value of it, with all the Fruits and Profits accruing by it; and Satisfaction is to be made for all the damage of detaining it.

But, 3. To whom is this Restitution to be made? Why, to the Party wronged, for common Reason directs the Satisfaction where the Injury was sustain'd: If the Party be deceas'd, then to the Heirs to whom the Right descends; but if these cannot be found, then to God Almighty the Lord of all, who hath transfer'd this Right on the Church and Poor, whom he hath made his Receivers in this Case, as appears by the Grant which himself hath made of it, *Numb. 5. 8. If he that hath done any Trespas, hath no Kinsman to receive the recompence of the Trespas, then let the Trespas be recompens'd unto the Lord, even to the Priest who shall make Atonement for him.* And for the Poor, Christ himself declares, that *whosoever shall do it to one of these, does it unto him,* *Mat. 25. 45.* by which we are directed where Restitution is to be made in all Cases.

If it shall be ask'd here concerning the quantity, How much is to be restor'd? I answer, all that hath been unjustly gotten or taken away, the whole damage must be repair'd, and all the wrong done must be satisfied for; this common Justice and Equity exact from us, which will us not to leave our Neighbour worse than we found him; we are to do him all the good we can, but not the least Harm or Injury: if any be done either wilfully or unadvisedly, full reparation must be made to the utmost of our Power and Knowledg, that no cry of Oppression may come against us, nor any have just cause to complain of our Injustice. Restitution then must be intire, and reach to the least Mite of unjust Gain; and where that is difficult to be known by reason of the multiplied acts of Fraud, there we are to return rather more than less, and be sure to exceed rather than come short of Satisfaction. This we find was the Practice of penitent Sinners in this matter, *Zachew* restor'd fourfold, and so did *St. Mathew* and the other Publicans, who had defrauded by their Exactions; and all that will find Mercy, must go and do likewise. But

But here it may be farther ask'd concerning the manner of Restitution; Whether it must be done by the Party himself that did the wrong, or whether it may be done by another in his stead? As also, whether the Reparation must be publick, or whether it may suffice if the wrong be privately repair'd? To which I answer, that if the Wrong done to any be notorious and publick, so as great offence may be given or taken by it, 'twill be expedient that the Restitution be made by the Person himself who did the wrong, and that as publickly too, if it conveniently may be, as the Injury, to prevent the Evil and Contagion of so bad an Example: otherwise, if the Damage be secret, a Man may provide for his own Credit, and secure a good Conscience, if he restore that privately by a Friend which was secretly taken away: tho in other Cases I dare not pronounce a private Restitution insufficient, presuming that where 'tis honestly and intirely made, it will be accepted both of God and Man.

But there is one scruple more, about the Time or Season of Restitution, when it is to be made? In answer to which I say; it must be done presently, without delay; as soon as the Mind is touch'd with the sense and remembrance of the wrong, it must be eas'd and reliev'd with all speed; for otherwise the Sin and the Trouble too will continue and encrease, so long as the Restitution is defer'd: *Say not to thy Neighbour (saith Solomon) Go thy way, and come again to morrow, and I will give thee, when thou hast it by thee,* Prov. 3. 27. Which Advice is good not only as to ordinary Debts, but is chiefly so as to Wrongs; the repairing whereof may not be put off by delays, but must be done out of hand.

This is the Nature, let us next consider the Necessity of Restitution; and this is so necessary, that without it the Curse of God will enter into and corrupt all we have; like a Moth it will eat thro and devour all our Substance, and these ill-gotten Goods like undigested Morfels will turn to Gall and Wormwood in the Belly: beside, the Sin of Theft will not be forgiven till the thing stoln be restor'd, 'twill still lie as a load upon our Mind, and make our Reckoning heavy; yea, the guilt and rust of it will rise up and witness against us at the last Day, when all ill-gotten Treasure shall be melted down about us, and torment us with unquenchable Flames.

Neither is the danger of unrepaired wrongs greater than the Comfort and Happiness of Restitution; for this will make us easy here, and eternally happy hereafter. *Zachens* had *Salvation come to his*

his House that very Day that he perform'd this; and our Saviour hath assured us, that they who now restore fourfold, shall receive more than a thousand fold in the World to come.

Thus we see what is forbidden, and what is requir'd in this Commandment: both which teach us to avoid the doing any wrong to our Neighbour, or if we have done any, to make all due Satisfaction for the wrong we have done.

To conclude then, *Let him that stole steal no more, but rather let him labor in an honest Calling, that he may be enabled to do justly, to love Mercy, and to walk humbly with God.*

DISCOURSE XX.

Exod. 20. 16. *Thou shalt not bear false Witness against thy Neighbour.*

THE foregoing Precepts take care for the security of Mens Persons and Possessions, and are given to preserve both from all Violence and Wrong; this provides for their good Name, and designs to guard it from Slander and Defamation. Indeed, a good Name is so dear and desirable a thing, that the very Subsistence of some, and the Comfort and Conveniences of all Men depend very much upon it. The wise Man tells us that *'tis rather to be chosen than great Riches*, which will afford but little Comfort without it, *Prov. 22. 1.* And elsewhere, *a good Name is better than precious Ointment, Eccles. 7. 1.* for it yields the sweetest savour to all that are round about us, and not only perfumes the Air we breathe in, but scatters its Fragrancy abroad, and transmits the Odour to Posterity.

And as this is a very desirable, so is it a very tender thing, that is easily wounded, and the Wounds made in it, how unjustly soever given, prove manytimes incurable, the Malignity of them spreading farther than any Plaister can reach. For which Reasons this Commandment was given to guard it from all unjust Assaults that may be made upon it, in these words, *Thou shalt not bear false Witness against thy Neighbour.*

This Precept is likewise Negative, and therefore we are first to learn what is forbidden by it, which in general are all the ways
of

of hurting the Credit and Reputation of our Neighbour; and these are sometimes more open, and sometimes more secret, both which are here plainly condemned by this Law. The more open ways are these following.

1. The bringing a false Accusation, or giving a false Testimony against any in Courts of Judicature: this is a wounding of Mens good Name to the purpose, and seems to be condemn'd by the letter of this Law; and this may be done several ways.

Either (1.) By charging any Person with what they do or may know to be false: such was that of *Potiphar's Wife*, who charged *Joseph* with incontinence, when she knew he rejected all motions towards it; of which we read, *Gen. 39*. Of the same kind were the false Witnesses suborn'd by *Jezebel* against *Naboth*, to testify his blaspheming God and the King; of which we read, *1 Kings 21*. *David* complain'd that false Witnesses rose up against him, laying to his Charge things that he knew not. Such were they who falsely accus'd our Saviour as an Enemy to *Cesar*, and his Apostles as Troublers of the World, and turning it upside down. This, how common soever in the World, is a work of the Devil, and they who practise it are the Children of that wicked one, and tread in the steps of the Accuser of the Brethren.

Again, (2.) This bearing false Witness implies not only the affirming of what was false, but the concealing of something that is true. The goodness or badness of mens Actions depend very much upon the Circumstances that attend them; and as all Circumstances must concur to a good Action, so the concealing of any one may mar and misrepresent it: A fair thing may look foul, by hiding that which recommends it; and a foul thing may look fair, by concealing the blackness and deformity of it. He that kills another, tho in his own Defence, or in the Execution of Justice, may be condemn'd as a Murderer, if those alleviating Circumstances are not brought to light; and great Injury may be done to Men, where any part of the Truth is conceal'd.

(3.) The affirming a thing with a higher degree of Assurance, than our Knowledge of it amounts to, comes under the Sin of bearing false Witness. Thus he that attests a thing as certain, which he believes only as probable, gives a false Testimony, because the thing he asserts or swears to may for ought he knows be otherwise; he gives his Evidence on uncertainties, and sticks not at wronging his Neighbour's Credit, or wounding his own Soul.

2. Another way of bearing false Witness against our Neighbour is that of Lying ; which is all speaking of untruths wittingly and willingly, with a purpose to deceive. And this may be done,

Sometimes for the promoting of some good either to our selves or others, which is call'd an officious Lye.

Sometimes to the prejudice and detriment of both, and this is call'd a pernicious Lye.

Sometimes again merely for Sport or Recreation, and this is known by the name of a merry Lye. All which being violations of Truth, and many ways impairing the Credit and good Name of one another, are forbidden in this Commandment, as *bearing false Witness against our Neighbour* : of this kind is all falsifying in our Words and Promises, which beside the damage it does the Credit, is many other ways hurtful to Mankind. And therefore we have many strict Precepts against this vile Practice : *Lye not one to another*, saith the Apostle ; and *putting away lying, speak every one Truth with his Neighbour*, Eph. 4. 25.

Now the Evil of Lying is apparent : for it perverts the end of speaking, which is freely and fairly to communicate our Minds to each other ; whereas this robs our Neighbour of that Debt of Truth we owe him, and makes the Tongue, which was given for the Glory of God and the good of one another, to become the Instrument of deceit and dishonour to both. And therefore our Saviour tells us that *lying is of the Devil, who was a Liar from the beginning, and the Father of it*. And they that delight in it, shall have their Portion with him in the Lake that burneth with Fire and Brimstone : for without are Dogs (saith the Apostle) and whatsoever loveth or maketh a Lye, Rev. 21. last.

3. Slandering is another way of bearing false Witness against our Neighbour ; and this consists in railing or spreading any false Reports of him to the prejudice of his Fame or Welfare : this is too common a Fault among Men, who whet their Tongue like a Sword, and cut as a sharp Razor, wounding the Reputation of each other without Consideration or Remorse. And this is done,

(1.) Sometimes by fixing black and infamous Characters on Men to their Prejudice and Disparagement ; which bolts are too often shot, and fly too much about the World. We find our Saviour himself could not escape the lashes of slandering Tongues, for he was branded for an *Impostor* and *Blasphemer*, a *Glutton*, a *Wine-bibber*, a *Friend of Publicans and Sinners* ; and his Apostles were

were stil'd Seditious, *and Troublers of the World*; and 'tis but too common, to fix the odious Titles of Proud, Covetous, Malicious and the like, upon Persons deserving a better Character.

(2.) Slandering is sometimes by forging Calumnies and evil Reports of another; when Men use their Wits in inventing Lies and Stories, to the hurting of the Credit, and impairing the Interest of our Neighbour: in which the Devil, who hath his Name from a Calumniator, is ever ready to assist and encourage them.

(3.) This is done sometimes by spreading the Lies and Stories invented by others: there are some who tho they do not devise evil Reports, do yet delight to receive and spread them; these do not come far short of the former, for what they want of Invention, they make up by their Diligence in divulging; and they differ no more than the maker of false Wares does from the seller or vender of them. And there are too many such brokers of counterfeit Wares, who deal in this vile Merchandize, and sell the Reputation of their Neighbour, which is a hellish Practice, that renders them odious both to God and Man: for which reason *Solomon* declares, that *he that uttereth Slander is a Fool*.

(4.) Detraction is another way of *bearing false Witness against our Neighbour*: this differs from the former in this, that Slander is a wrongful Imputation of some Vice, Detraction is a wilful lessening of another's Vertue; the former consists in charging some Evil upon him, the latter in undervaluing and obscuring the Good that is in them: both which impair the Fame, and lessen the Esteem of those that deserve better. This is likewise but too frequent a Practice, whereby worthy Persons are less prefer'd, and worthy Actions less pursued, than they ought to be. If you observe it, you will find that when the Merits of any Person shine forth with a brighter Lustre than others, many will be busy to cast a Cloud upon them, and to sully the Glory of his best Actions: He is indeed a learned Man (saith one) but he knows it; He is a good Man (saith another) but he hath his Failings; 'Tis true (saith a third) he is a sober Man, but he is sour and cynical; It cannot be denied (saith a fourth) that he doth his Duty well, but he is close and covetous, and seeketh his own Gain. Thus does the Detractor pick out all the Flaws, and where he cannot find, will make Faults to lower the Fame of one that seems to mount above him, lessening all the Good, aggravating all the

Evil, blaming the Principles, disparaging the Means, and perverting the End of all his Actions.

Now this is directly opposite to that part of Charity which we call Candor and Ingenuity: for that inclines Men to commend the Vertues and good Qualities of another, to give every thing its due weight; 'tis unwilling to find faults, and instead of disclosing one, will cover a multitude of Sins; it gives all Persons and Actions their just Praise, and is so far from speaking that it *thinketh no Evil*, 1 Cor. 13.

Whereas the Detractor loves to find flaws and blemishes in the best Things, and to derogate from the Praise of the worthiest Persons: he prys narrowly into them, to find out something to bespatter and diminish both, and is never better pleas'd than when his Arrows or bitter Words hit and wound the brightest Vertue: he is uneasy under the Commendation of others, as thinking it takes off from his own Worth, and seeks to raise his own Fame upon the Ruins of others. In a word, the Detractor, like some sort of Flies, delights to fasten on fore Places, and with others sucks Poison out of the sweetest Flowers.

4. Flattery is another way of bearing false Witness against our Neighbour; and this differs from the former, that whereas the Detractor takes off from another's worth, the Flatterer adds too much to it, and so hurts his Credit as much in the Excess as the other doth in the Defect. The Flatterer represents Persons and Things otherwise than they are, extolling some Persons far above their worth, and giving them higher Characters than belong to them, and likewise commending some Actions beyond their desert, and setting them in a brighter Light than they should: all which is bearing false Testimony, and giving wrong measures of Action. There are some who will celebrate those good Qualities in another, which they know are not in him, at least in that degree which the Parasite ascribes to him; and there are others, who, if they see one guilty of a Vice, will commend him for the contrary Vertue, and not barely conceal but celebrate his Deformities: this is fulsome Flattery, and bearing false Testimony with a witness; yea, 'tis what the Prophet denounces a woe against, the *calling Evil Good, and Good Evil, the taking Light for Darkness, and Darkness for Light*. What gross Extravagancies of this kind some Parasites have run into, is too well known to relate; and what vile and notorious Evils may and have proceeded from it, is easy to imagine.

5. Judging and censuring our Brother, is another way of *bearing false Witness against him*. This we find frequently and severely condemn'd in Holy Scripture; *Judg not* (saith our Saviour) *that ye be not judged: Who made thee a Judg?* saith the Apostle. Not that the Office of a Judg to censure and condemn some Mens Wickedness is here question'd, or that we may not publish or testify their Crimes before earthly Tribunals; much less are we restrain'd from giving friendly Admonition and Reproofs to an erring Brother: but that we are not to judg any rashly, and without authority, being neither call'd to it as a Magistrate or Witness, nor acting in it as a friendly Admonisher; that we do not censure any without a Cause, or to promote bad Designs: much less are we to pass Sentence upon Mens Thoughts, that are out of our reach, or judg their final State, which belongs not to us. These things have a very bad influence upon our Neighbour's good Name, and are therefore to be shun'd by us.

Lastly, All Scoffing or Scurrilous exposing any to Contempt is here condemn'd, as bearing false Witness against our Neighbour: for this is many times a great prejudice to the Name, and likewise to the Quiet and Interest of another; and therefore the wise Man tells us, *He that mocketh his Neighbour is void of Understanding*, Prov. 11. 12. meaning, that he doth not well consider the damage he brings to him, nor the detriment he thereby draws on his Soul.

These are the more open ways of hurting our Brother's Credit, and are here forbidden, as *bearing false Witness against him*.

Beside which, there are other more secret ways of wounding another's Reputation, that fall under the Prohibition of this Commandment, as Backbiting, Whispering and Talebearing: And these, tho less observ'd, are by no means the less injurious; yea, they are oftentimes the more dangerous by being the less seen, and work fore and incurable Evils before they are discern'd. These sort of Evil-speakers work like Moles under ground: and as Men may suffer more by the invisible hollowness of an Earthquake, than by the loudest blusters of a Storm; so the Credit of our Neighbour may receive deeper Wounds by the invisible Darts of secret Calumnies, than by the bolder strokes of open and publick Slanders.

Now Backbiting (to speak more particularly of them) is the speaking Evil of any behind his back; and this distinguishes it from all the foremention'd ways of evil speaking, that whereas

they are done before the Face, this is done behind the Back, which bites the more incurably, because it cannot be seen or prevented: an Enemy that comes behind and unawares being far more dangerous, than one that is in view and comes before the Face; against the former we may arm and defend our selves, whereas the latter sets upon us naked and unprovided. And therefore we find the Backbiter in the black List of the greatest Sinners, *Rom. 1. 30.* and number'd with those that are to be excluded from the Kingdom of Heaven, *1 Cor. 6. 10.* whereas a good Man is describ'd to be one that backbiteth not his Neighbour, and is thereby fitted to ascend the Holy Hill, *Psal. 15. 3.*

Whispering is that sort of Backbiting, that consists in relating Mens failings in private, committing them to one another as a Secret, and willing them not to name the Author: this is an artificial and withal a very malicious way of defaming, and many times goes farther, and makes deeper Impression than more open Calumnies; for he that is intrusted with this secret commonly obliges another with it, and so 'tis communicated from one to another, till it creep about like Infection, and leave the Party's Reputation wounded beyond any Redress or Cure. And therefore we find these Whisperers too reckon'd in the Catalogue of those that are given up to a reprobate Mind, and without Repentance shall never enter into the Kingdom of God, *Rom. 1. 30.*

Talebearing is somewhat a more open way of defaming, and signifies the telling Tales of others as a piece of News, and to find matter of Talk, which is many times done to the great prejudice of Mens good Names; and therefore God Almighty gave an express Charge against it, *Levit. 19. 16. Thou shalt not go up and down as a Tale-bearer among the People:* the word in the Original is *Rachil*, which signifies a Trader in ill reports and stories of other Men; where we are bid to beware of driving that ill Trade, *or going up and down with Tales of other Folk.* This is what the Psalmist condemns in some, who *sit and speak against their Brother, and slander their own Mother's Son*, *Psal. 50.* whose words (the wise Man tells us) are *as Swords, and wound even to the innermost parts of the Belly*, *Prov. 20. 19. Prov. 26. 22. Prov. 12. 18.* These, beside the evil they do to Mens good Names, destroy the Peace and Quiet of the whole Neighbourhood; for *a Tale-bearer stirreth up Strife, and separateth good Friends.*

Thus we see what is forbidden in this Commandment; namely, all manner of Evil-speaking, both open and secret, to the prejudice

judice of the Fame and Reputation of any other, which is some way or other to *bear false witness against our Neighbour.*

But because all the Motives and Occasions of this Evil are forbidden with it, the Apostle in 1 *Pet.* 2. 1. hath will'd us to *lay aside all Malice*, which whets the Tongue against one another; *all Guile*, which tips it with Falshood and Dissimulation; *all Hypocrisy*, which uses it to the disparaging of others, to set off themselves; *all Envy*, which sours mens Minds, and corrupts their discourse of each other; *all Evil speaking*, which breeds the Poison of Asps under the lips. In a word, let us lay aside all Pride, Self-interest, Garrulity, Faction, and whatever else may lead to Slander and Defamation.

DISCOURSE XXI.

Exod. 20. 16. *Thou shalt not bear false Witness against thy Neighbour.*

I Shew'd in my last what was forbidden in this Commandment, to wit, all the ways of impairing the Credit and good Name of one another, together with all the Motives that occasion or lead to it. I proceed now to what is requir'd in this Commandment: And here the

First and great thing requir'd is the preserving the Honour and good Name of our Neighbour. This is what St. *Peter* means, when he wills us to *honor all Men*, 1 *Pet.* 2. meaning, that we are to be so tender of the Honor of every one, as instead of impairing, to do all we can to preserve and advance it. Now this Honor is founded upon some Excellency that is common to all Mankind; for they have all the Image of God stamp'd upon them, which therefore requires a sutable Regard to be paid to it in the meanest Person: and tho some by reason of their higher Station, their greater Parts and Power, may challenge higher Degrees of it, yet that common Nature, of which all are Partakers, hath some measure of Honor due to it, which is to tender the good Name of every one, and to preserve all Men as far as we may from Obloquy and Contempt; for *he that mocketh the poorest Man* (as *Solomon* tells us) *despises his Maker.* 'Tis a Contempt of

of God to vilify such as wear his Image; and we disparage our selves in abusing those that are so nearly ally'd to us by an Affinity of Nature: whereas all such are to be honor'd for God's sake, and to be lov'd for our own. We are to be as tender of theirs as of our own Reputation, and instead of hurting to heal the wounds that are made in it. If we see another suffer under a slander which we know to be false, we are oblig'd to appear in his defence, to assert and vindicate his abus'd Innocence, and to the best of our power wipe out such unjust Aspersions. This is imply'd in *not bearing false Witness*, and is a Debt we owe to the Reputation of all Men.

Secondly, Here is requir'd Truth in all our Words and Promises; for the *not bearing false witness*, signifies our bearing true Witness, and that we are to have regard to it in all our Speeches: for the Psalmist describes a good Man to be one, *that speaketh the Truth from his heart*, Psal. 15. 2. And this is to be done both in publick Courts of Justice, and likewise in all private Commerce and Conversation with each other.

1. I say, we are to speak the truth from our heart in all Courts of Justice, when we are summon'd to bear witness for or against any. This is a matter of great consequence both to the Lives and Fortunes of Men, the Safety of which depends very much hereupon; and therefore the Oath administer'd upon such occasions, requires all Men to *Speak the Truth, the whole Truth, and nothing but the Truth*.

They are to speak *the Truth*, without forging or falsifying in any matter, which perverts Judgment and Justice.

The whole Truth, without concealing any part out of favor or prejudice to either Party, which may hinder Justice, and occasion much wrong.

Nothing but the Truth, without adding any doubtful and uncertain Conjectures, which may mislead the Hearers, and bring on a wrong Sentence. These are the Properties of a good Witness, upon whose Testimony mens Lives and Estates depend; *A faithful Witness will not lye, or forge any thing, but a false Witness will utter Lyes*, Prov. 14. 5. And elsewhere, *He that speaketh Truth sheweth forth Righteousness, but a false Witness Deceit*, Prov. 12. 17. This is to be carefully minded by all that are call'd upon to give evidence in any Cause, that they confine their Testimony to Truth, and to such things only as they know to be so; for 'tis this that preserves the publick Peace and Welfare, prevents Injustice

justice and Wrong, and secures to us the Peace and Tranquillity of our own Minds : yea, this promotes likewise the Glory of God, for *Joshua* bids *Acban* to give Glory to God by speaking the truth in the matter of the *Wedge of Gold*, and the *Babylonish Garment*, which he had secretly purloin'd, *Josh. 7. 19.* Indeed God is glorify'd by speaking Truth, for that bespeaks not only a Sense of and Reverence for his Attributes, but a Conformity to his Nature and Will, who is *Truth it self*, and requires *Truth in the inward parts* : whereas God is highly dishonour'd by bearing false Witness, which signifies the casting off all Love and Fear of him.

2. And as this Commandment requires Truth in Courts of Justice, so does it in all our Conversation and Commerce with each other, in which we are commanded to *speake every Man truth with his Neighbour*, *Eph. 4. 25.*

In all private Converse, our Saviour's Advice is, that *our Communication be Yea, Yea, Nay, Nay* ; that is, in affirming and denying, and both of them in truth, speaking of things as they are, without falsifying or forswearing : for these are of the evil one, who was a Lyar from the beginning and the Father of them ; whereas *God is Truth*, and his People are stil'd *Children that will not lye*, that have a veneration for Truth, and in all their Words and Actions keep to it. Indeed, Truth is too sacred a thing to be prostituted or play'd away ; 'tis the Cement and Safeguard of all Society, and must therefore be inviolably observ'd in all our Communication with each other ; but especially in our Promises and Contracts, wherein our Speech must be according to our Thoughts, and agreeable to our Purposes and Resolutions, standing firm to our Promises, and doing according to all that hath gone out of our mouth. 'Tis this alone that answers the end of Speech, which was given as a means to convey our Mind and Meaning, and thereby to be the Instrument of Intercourse and Confidence in one another : so that he who useth his Tongue to the speaking of Truth, useth it as God hath appointed ; whereas he that telleth Lyes, contradicts the Design of Speech, and makes his Tongue the Instrument of Deceit and Mischief. Beside,

Truth is a Debt which we all owe to one another, every Man having a Right to have our Meaning truly transmitted to him by our Words, the Faculty of speaking being given to that end. So that whoever falsifies or equivocates with his Neighbour, does an Act of great Injustice, by depriving him of that Right of Truth, which God hath made due to every man ; and he bears
false

false witness to the purpose, who speaks one thing and means another. And therefore,

Thirdly, Another Vertue requir'd in this Commandment, is an honest Simplicity in all our Words and Actions. This empties the Heart of all evil Purposes and Designs against any, and fills it with strong Desires of doing good to all; by which means there is no opposition between the Words and the Thoughts, nor do the Actions run counter to either. He that designs mischief to another within, commonly disguises it by fair Speeches without, and so hides the Naughtiness of the Heart by the Flatteries and Falshood of the Tongue: whereas he that hath nothing but good wishes towards others, will never falsify in his words; his Tongue will not vary from his Heart, nor his Actions from either, but a true Harmony and Concord will be found in them all. This is that *Simplicity and godly Sincerity*, in which all Men are directed to have their Conversation. And this consists,

1. In a Freedom from all Malice, the vilest and most venomous of all the Passions, stil'd therefore not only Wicked, but Wickedness it self; for so *Malitia* in *Latin*, and *κακία* in *Greek* both signify: 'tis compounded of Anger and Hatred, but more dangerous than both, being join'd with a desire of doing mischief, and a delight in it when done. 'Tis a secret, subtle, and mischievous Passion, having the Craft of the Fox mixt with the Cruelty of the Tiger; it fills the Heart with Gall, tips the Tongue with Falshood, and as *Solomon* describes it, will not suffer men to sleep till they have done evil, Prov. 4. 16. Whereas an honest Simplicity of Mind is free from all this; it desires all good, but designs no evil to his Neighbour; and tho it may have something of the Wisdom of the Serpent, yet it still retains the Innocence of the Dove, and will not harm any in Body, Goods, or Name.

2. The Simplicity here requir'd consists in a Freedom from all Guile, Hypocrisy, and Dissimulation: These things put false colours upon mens Words and Actions, and make them appear to be what they are not, and that sets them upon using all their Art and Industry to maintain the disguise. They that steer their course by these measures, look one way and row another, professing the greatest dearness when their Designs are most dangerous, and by fair Speeches color over the foulest Actions. *David* complain'd of this in his time, that his greatest Enemies were those that pretended the greatest Friendship: 'Twas not an open Enemy (saith he) that did me this dishonour, but my Companion, and my

my own familiar Friend, and they that eat of my Bread laid wait for me. Judas came to our Saviour with *Hail Master*, and kiss'd him at the same time that he betray'd him. And St. Paul was in great perils by false Brethren, who spake him fair, when they design'd him the greatest mischief. This is but too much practis'd in our days, wherein the antient Simplicity of our Forefathers is in a great measure lost, and Men are degenerated in Craft and Subtilty, laying snares in their Talk, and traps in all their Ways and Dealings with each other. This is directly contrary to the Simplicity requir'd in this Commandment, in which we are forbidden to bear any false witness ; but contrariwise that all our Speeches should agree with our Minds, and our Works bear a true Testimony to our Words : to this purpose is that of St. Paul, *Let Love be without dissimulation*, Rom. 12. St. Peter propounds to us our Saviour's Example, *who did no Sin, nor was any guile found in his mouth*. Nathaniel is commended for a true Israelite, in whom was no guile. The Apostle wills us to lay aside all Guile and Hypocrisy, and as new-born Babes desire the sincere Milk of the Word, that we may grow thereby ; removing all gall out of our Heart, that no guile may be found in our Tongue.

Lastly, The Simplicity here requir'd implies a freedom from all envying and evil-speaking, which the same Apostle therefore exhorts us to lay aside. For Envy sours mens Minds, and embitters their Tongues against each other : He that envies another, would have him as hateful to all Mankind as he is to himself, and to that end represents him in the blackest colours he can, to render him odious. Ill-will, we say, never speaks well, but delights to blazon and aggravate all Miscarriages : and therefore to cure these Vices of the Tongue, we must root all Spite and Envy out of the Mind, which are so prejudicial to the good Name of our Neighbour, and learn that piece of Charity that envieth not, and will not suffer us to think or speak unseemly of any.

Thus we see both what is forbidden, and what is requir'd in this Commandment : To the former belong all the evil Arts of lessening or hurting our Neighbour's Credit ; to the latter appertain all the good means of preserving and promoting their Reputation. For the better observing of both, it will not be amiss to recommend to you that wholesom Advice of St. Paul to this end in 1 Theff. 4. 11. *Study to be quiet, and do your own business* : where the Apostle, for the preserving of mens good Name, puts them,

1. Upon the study of Peace and Quietness ; for Brawls and Contention sharpen mens Tongues, and make them speak and think the worst they can of one another. He that stirreth up Strife, will surely stir up Slander : for as the moving of the Water raiseth up the Slime and Filth that lies at the bottom ; so the moving of Strife stirs up the Gall and Choler within, and that will corrupt the Language, and discover it self in the Bitterness of the Tongue. To prevent which, the Apostle wills men to *seek after Peace, and study to be quiet* ; to which end, they should beware of Faction, and making of Parties, and avoid all Fraud and Falshood in their dealings : for these things break the Peace, and disturb the Quiet of the World.

Now *Study*, we know, implies an earnest Intention of Mind, accompany'd with diligent Enquiry and Endeavours after something : and the Apostle making Quietness a matter of Study, shews at once the Excellency of it, that 'tis worth studying ; and likewise the difficulty of it, that it wants it.

That 'tis worth our Study, the many Benefits we reap from Peace, and the many Miseries that flow from Contention may easily satisfy us.

That it wants it, is no less evident from the Proneness of Mankind to Feuds and Contention, and the many Occasions and Temptations leading thereunto.

2. To preserve each other's good Name, we must mind and do our own business, without unnecessary meddling in other mens matters ; for they that thrust themselves into others business, commonly make too bold with their Reputation, assuming all Wisdom to themselves, and scarce allowing others enough to understand or manage their own Affairs. Hence the Apostle joins *Busy-Bodies and Tattlers* together, 1 Tim. 5. 13. adding, that they *wander about from house to house, not only idle, but Tattlers, and speaking things which they ought not.*

To conclude then this Commandment : We are here directed to avoid all unjust ways of lessening or detracting from the Honor and Reputation of our Neighbour, which is *bearing false witness against him* ; and likewise to do all the Right and Service we lawfully may to his good Name, which is the bearing true Testimony to and for him.

DISCOURSE XXII.

Exod. 20. 17. *Thou shalt not covet thy Neighbour's House, thou shalt not covet thy Neighbour's Wife, nor his Man-Servant, nor his Maid-Servant, nor his Ox, nor his Ass, nor any thing that is thy Neighbour's.*

THESE Words contain the Tenth and last Commandment in the Decalogue ; the Design whereof is to regulate the inward Thoughts and Desires of the Heart, and to keep them from all unlawful lusting or coveting what is another's. The foregoing Precepts seem expressly to relate only to the outward Man, and to restrain the external Acts of Violence and Injustice ; but this goes deeper, and lays a restraint upon the inward Man ; it puts a check upon all secret and unlawful Desires, tho they never come into Act, and refines the Heart from all unjust Hankerings, thereby purifying the Fountain, or stopping the Spring whence all Evil issues : for out of the Heart proceed evil Thoughts, Murders, Adulteries, Fornications, Thefts, false Witness, Blasphemies, Mat. 15. 19.

Indeed all the Laws of God being spiritual reach the inward Man, and affect the Heart ; and therefore our Saviour, in expounding the Commandments, hath shew'd the inward Motions to Sin to be prohibited with the outward Acts.

But yet because this is not plainly or literally express'd in the former Precepts, God Almighty thought fit to add this last Commandment, in which he expressly arraigns the Thoughts, and condemns the very first Motions of our Heart towards any thing that is evil, saying, *Thou shalt not covet thy Neighbour's House, &c.* In which he requires us to be so far from depriving any of what is theirs, that we are not so much as to wish or desire it, abstaining not only from all unjust Actions, but from all covetous Inclinations ; which is the Sense of these words, *Thou shalt not covet.*

Now this Precept being negative, I must (as we have done in the foregoing) observe both what is forbidden, and what is requir'd in it.

For the first, the great thing forbidden in this Law is the Sin of Covetousness, or an inordinate lusting after or desiring that which is another's. I call it an inordinate Lust, because there

may be an honest and regular Desire of that which is another's, when it keeps within due bounds, and confines it self only to just and lawful means of obtaining it : for there can be no Traffick or Commerce between Man and Man, without desiring what is another's ; no man will buy or purchase any thing of another which he has not a mind to, and all Commerce and Exchange of one thing for another depends upon their liking or desiring one another's Goods. But beside these fair and orderly courses, there are other irregular Desires, whereby Men thirst after others Goods, without the due means of compassing them ; and these, if they go no further, tho they seldom rest there, are gross Violations of this Commandment.

There are some things of our Neighbours, that may not lawfully be parted with at all : there are others that he cannot part with without great Loss and Inconvenience ; and there are other things which he may be unwilling to part with. Now in such cases to covet any of our Neighbour's Goods, is a very evil Covetousness ; and this will lead me to consider the several Objects of Concupiscence recited in this Commandment. As,

1. We are forbidden to *covet our Neighbour's House*. By his House here we are to understand not only the Place of his Habitation, but all the Lands and Tenements of another, his Field, Vineyard, or whatever else he is rightfully possess'd of ; these we are to suffer him quietly to enjoy without so much as cherishing any secret Wishes or Hankerings after them. 'Twas *Abab's* Sin to covet *Naboth's* Vineyard, and 'twill be no less so in us to thirst after our Neighbour's House or Farm : not but that in some cases there may be a fair and honest way of desiring and procuring to a man's self the Lands and Tenements of another ; as when the Owner may legally part with them, when he is willing to do so, and when the Terms on both sides are just and right ; in which cases he may not only desire, but enter upon such purchas'd Possessions : But where they may not be lawfully sold, as where they are entail'd on other Heirs, and where they are unwilling to part with them, there to covet or invade them is a sinful Concupiscence.

2. We are forbidden to *covet our Neighbour's Wife*. This is in no wise to be coveted, because 'tis in no wise to be parted with ; *Those whom God hath join'd together, no Man may put asunder*. No Consent of Parties can dissolve the Bonds of Wedlock, or violate the Laws of Chastity, and therefore all Desires of this kind must
be

be sinful and inordinate ; for being made one by their own mutual Agreement, as well as by the Institution of God Almighty, their Hearts may not stray from each other, nor must the Hearts of others run towards them : so that to covet or withdraw the Affection of either is a manifest Breach of the Laws of God and Nature.

3. We are forbidden to *covet our Neighbour's Servant*, whether it be *Man or Maid-Servant* : for these are a part of our Neighbour's Goods, which being by mutual Covenant and Promise become his, he hath a right to their Labor, and is by the Laws of God and Man intitled to the Benefit of their Service, and therefore none may lawfully desire or deprive him of it. Indeed, a Master and Servant by mutual Consent may lawfully part, and then they are free for any other ; and sometimes a Master for just reasons may remove and put away an idle and unfaithful Servant : but none may secretly wish for, entice or flock away another's Servant, for this is a Breach of the Rules of Justice and Charity, and breeds no small disturbance among Neighbours ; and therefore we may not at any time seek to raise Jealousies or Dislike between Master and Servant, with a design to get him away, nor use any Baits or Allurements to tempt or entice him from him. For this is to do that to another, which we would be very unwilling should be done to our selves, and so is quite contrary to that Love and Kindness we are to bear to one another.

4. We are forbidden to *covet our Neighbour's Ox or Ass* ; by which we are to understand all his Cattel of what kind or sort soever, belonging either to his Flock or Herd. In these things our Neighbour may have so just a Propriety, as may not be invaded so much as in a Wish ; for if it come there, 'tis ten to one 'twill go farther : Coveting will lead on to purloining, and the next step to desiring is defrauding. And therefore this Commandment seeks to dam up the Fountain of this Evil, by checking the first Motions and Tendencies thereunto ; for it cautions us not only against robbing and stealing our Neighbour's Cattel, but against harboring all Thoughts or Desires that might lead to it. Yea, we are commanded to use our best endeavours for the preserving and encreasing our Neighbour's Flock or Kine ; but in no wise to wish the hurting or diminishing of them. If thy Neighbour's Ox or Ass fall into a pit, our Saviour wills thee to help him out ; if he wander or go astray, thou art bid to reduce and help him home : so far ought we to be from coveting another's

another's Cattel, that we are to save and succour them in all their wandrings.

Lastly, We are forbidden to *covet any thing that is our Neighbour's*. The former part of the Commandment relates to things of weight and consequence ; but lest any should indulge themselves in smaller matters, or think they have a greater liberty in those things, 'tis added, *nor any thing that is his* ; where we are ty'd up from desiring any the smallest thing that is another's. There are some who will own the coveting another's House, Wife, Servant, or Cattel to be very unjust and unreasonable, being all matters of some moment ; but for a little Corn, Grass, Wood, or Apples, and the like, these they think such trivial things, that they are not to be much stood upon ; and so are apt in things of this nature to give a liberty not to their Hearts only in coveting, but to their Hands too in purloining of them. Now this Commandment corrects all such Mistakes ; for that charges us not to covet any thing that is our Neighbour's, he having an equal Right in small as well as in greater matters ; and he that violates the Authority of God in the one, will soon do it in the other. 'Tis usual from little things to rise to greater, and many by using their Fingers to pilfering in smaller matters, have gone on to things of higher value ; which should make Men beware of the beginnings of this Vice, and not to make bold with the Propriety of our Neighbour in the lightest matters, the Greatness or Smalness of the thing coveted making no difference in the Inordinacy of the Desire.

Thus we see the Sin forbidden in this Commandment, with the several Parts and Branches of it. And here we must call to mind the Rule laid down in the beginning ; That where any Sin is forbidden, there all the Motives and Inducements to it are prohibited with it : By which Rule we shall find sundry Evils condemn'd by this Law, as leading to this great Sin of Covetousness. As,

1. Discontent with our present Condition: This we shew'd to be forbidden in the sixth Commandment, as an Occasion of stealing ; for he that is uneasy and dissatisfy'd with his own State, will be invading of others, and will not stick to repair what he thinks lacking in his own Fortunes by taking from his Neighbour. And the same is forbidden in this Commandment, as an Occasion of coveting ; for he that likes not his own Condition, will be still coveting and craving what he should not ; and while he thinks he hath not enough, will be ever uneasy and desirous of more :

The

Second Part of the Church-Catechism. 487

The Foolishness of Man (saith Solomon) *perverteth his way, and his Heart fretteth against the Lord*, Prov. 19. 3. where he styles Discontent, *The Foolishness of Man*; and indeed so it is, for it deprives Men of all the Comfort of what they have, and makes them as restless with as without it. *Ahab* could take no pleasure in all the Glory and Greatness of a Kingdom, whilst he thirsted after *Naboth's Vineyard*; for 'tis said, *He came to his House heavy and displeas'd, he laid him down upon his Bed, turn'd away his face, and would eat no bread*, 1 Kings 21. 4. This Folly of a Man (as the Wise Man tells us) *perverteth his way*; so it did him, for it led him into Oppression and Bloodshed, and so it does many others, who are hereby led into the ways of Fraud and Injustice. The Apostle declares, that they who thus covet to be rich, by an Uneasiness in their present Fortunes, *fall into Temptation and a Snare, and into many foolish and hurtful Lusts, that drown them in Destruction and Perdition*. Beside, the Wise Man adds, that Discontent with our Condition *fretteth the Heart against the Lord*; as if he had dealt hardly with them, and deny'd them that which they desir'd or deserv'd; it makes them quarrel with the Dispensations of Divine Providence, and think other mens Lot better than theirs; this leads to coveting, and that to the purloining what is another's.

2. Envy is another Sin forbidden in this Commandment, as an Occasion of this evil Concupiscence. This is an Effect of the former, and naturally leads to Covetousness; for he that is discontented with his own Condition, will be ever envying that of others, and that will naturally beget inordinate Desires and Hankerings after it. This is a Sin that offers a great Indignity to God, for it will not allow him the disposal of his own Blessings: the envious Person would have things order'd not by the Wisdom of the Divine Will, but by the Measures of his Fancy and Humor; he would be the sole Carver of his own and other mens Fortunes, and therefore grudges and murmurs if any one have more than he would have him; which is a great Affront to the Wisdom and Authority of our Maker.

Beside, This is high Injustice to our Neighbour, to covet what is justly his, and to repine at his Prosperity, in which we ought to rejoice; to ail at him because God hath favour'd him, and to love him the less for that for which we ought to love him the more. Again, this is no small injury to a Man's self, for it destroys the Peace and Tranquillity of his Mind, and robs him of
all

all the Comfort he might reap from his own or others Prosperity; this envious coveting of what is another's, serving only to fret and gall his Mind, to macerate his Body, and to bring Leanness and Rottenness into his Bones.

3. Another Occasion of Coveting here forbidden, is an immoderate care and carking for the things of this Life; for this carries Men oftentimes too far, and makes their Desires run after that which is another's: for which reason we find our Saviour giving a strict Caution against it, Mat. 6. 25. *I say unto you, Take no thought for your Life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, nor yet for your Body, what ye shall put on: Is not the Life more than Meat, and the Body than Rayment? &c.* Where our Saviour does not condemn all prudent and moderate Care about earthly things, nor will us to cast off all Thoughts and Concern for any bodily Provision; no, we are bid to *provide things honest in the sight of all men*, and to that end, to be not slothful, but diligent in the business of our Vocation, Rom. 12. 11, 17. But our Saviour's Charge is not to give way to any anxious, perplexing or solicitous Cares about these things, such as are accompany'd with a Distrust of God's Providence, and put Men upon inordinate Desires and Endeavours after what is not their own: for these destroy Property, and disturb the Peace and Order of the World; they violate the Laws of God, and bring Ruin and Destruction to our own Souls: and therefore we find our Saviour using many Arguments in that Chapter, to cure these carking and immoderate Cares. For,

1. He sends us to the Fowls of the Air, and the Beasts of the Field, who *sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into Barns, and yet your heavenly Father feedeth them*; adding, *Are ye not much better than they?* verse 26. To check all solicitous Thoughts about Meat and Drink, he minds us of the Provision made for all inferior Creatures, how *he feeds the Ravens*, and will not suffer a Sparrow to fall to the ground; and can we think he will starve his own Children? Again, to cure all anxious Cares about Rayment, he

2. Sends us to the Lilies of the Field, to consider how they grow, they *toil not, neither do they spin, and yet I say unto you, that Solomon in all his Glory was not array'd like one of these*, ver. 28. adding, that if God so clothe the Grass of the Field, that to day is, and to morrow is cast into the Oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little Faith?

3. He

3. He shews the Vanity of all such carking and distrustful Cares, which can neither *add one Cubit to our Stature*, nor one Grain to our Estate without God's Blessing ; which will be sooner obtain'd by a devout Dependence upon his Providence, than by all the anxious and indirect Arts of our own contrivance.

These, together with Idleness and Pride, are the principal Motives and Occasions of that sinful Concupiscence condemn'd in this Commandment ; which we are therefore carefully to watch against, as the Enemies of our Souls, and the Obstacles of our Salvation. In a word, let us check the first Motions of Discontent, Envy, and Ambition, which else will betray us into greater Evils, lest by letting loose our Hearts to coveting, we let loose our Hands to picking and stealing ; and by both let our selves loose to all the Miseries and Punishments both of this Life and the next.

DISCOURSE XXIII.

Exod. 20. 17. *Thou shalt not covet thy Neighbour's House, thou shalt not covet thy Neighbour's Wife, nor his Man-Servant, nor his Maid-Servant, nor his Ox or his Ass, nor any thing that is his.*

I Have spoken to the Negative part of this Commandment, which forbids all coveting or desiring any thing that is another's : I proceed now to the Affirmative part of it, which instructs us in the thing requir'd in it, and that is, Contentment with our own Condition ; both which are urg'd by the Apostle, Heb. 13. 5. *Let your Conversation be without Covetousness, and be content with such things as ye have.*

St. Paul represents this as an Art, which he had study'd and learnt himself, Phil. 4. 11. *I have learnt (saith he) in whatever state I am, therewith to be content :* which Art he would likewise have learnt and practis'd by all Christians, 1 Tim. 6. 8. *Having Food and Rayment, let us learn therewith to be content.* In treating therefore of this great Duty, I must

First, Shew the Nature of Contentment, what it is.

Secondly, The Fitness and Reasonableness of it. And,

Lastly, Conclude with some Rules to attain to the Art of it.

R r r

For

For the *First*, Contentment is such a Satisfaction or Well-pleasedness of mind in a man's own Condition, as renders him easy both to himself and others.

I stile it a *Satisfaction or Well-pleasedness of Mind*: This shews us the Rise and Seat of true Contentment, which springs from within, and is wholly seated in the Mind. It riseth not from the Abundance of outward things, which oftner breeds Disquiet than brings Contentment; but in the inward Frame and Disposition of the Soul, whereby 'tis enabled thankfully to enjoy and acquiesce in the Portion allotted to us.

Moreover, I stile it a *Well-pleasedness with our own Condition*: This shews us the Object of Contentment, which is our own Condition; or as the Apostle expresses it, *with such things as we have*. He that suffers his Fancy to rove, or his Desires to run after what is another's, will never be content with his own, as we may see in *Abab*, who thirsting after *Nabob's* Vineyard, could find no pleasure in all the Glory and Greatness of a Kingdom. And therefore *St. Paul* declares that he *coveted no man's Silver, or Gold, or Apparel*, Acts 20. 33. but had *learnt to be contented with his own Estate*, Phil. 4. 11. and that not only with his present State, but with any State whatsoever that should happen to him: for he knew how to be abased, as well as how to abound, every where and in all things he was instructed, both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need; as he tells us, *verse 12*.

Furthermore, I stile it such a *Well-pleasedness with our Condition*, as renders us easy to our selves: *The good Man* (saith *Solomon*) *shall be satisfy'd from himself*. He hath such a Spring of Joy and Peace from within, as keeps him from murmuring and repining at his own Lot, and makes him chearfully welcome whatever God is pleas'd to send him; which good Effect of this Vertue is attended with another, which renders him easy not only to himself, but to all others: for Contentment preserves Men from all the evil Effects of Envy, and makes them rather to rejoice, than repine at another's Prosperity; by which the Heart is kept from coveting, and the Hand from purloining any thing that is another's. This is the Nature, and these are the Effects of Contentment, which is a Lesson fit and necessary to be learnt of all Christians. To which end I must proceed,

Secondly, To shew the Reasonableness of this Vertue: And that will plainly appear, if we consider,

1. That

1. That whatever our State and Condition may be, 'tis that which is allotted us by God, the Sovereign Disposer of all things; nothing that we have can properly be call'd our own, for we receive all from the Bounty of our Maker: *The Earth is the Lord's, and the Fulness thereof*, which he bestows as he thinks fit on the Sons of Men. We are Debtors to him for our very Being, for *we our selves* (as the Apostle tells us) *are not our own*, being made by his Power, and daily supported by his Providence, in whom *we live, move, and have our Being*: So that we are concern'd rather to be content and thankful for what we have, than murmur and complain for what we want: *Is it not lawful for him to do what he will with his own? Is thine Eye Evil because his is Good?* And as we can claim nothing as our Due, so neither can we challenge any thing as our Desert; for we *are less than the least of all his Mercys*, and can merit nothing but Misery and Wrath at God's Hand: and where we can challenge nothing of Right, we ought in reason to be content and receive with Gratitude what we have. But then,

2. If to the Sovereign Right and Title of God Almighty, we add the Consideration of his Wisdom and Goodness, we shall see far greater reason to be content with our Portion; for what we have is dealt out to us by an all-wise and gracious Hand, even by one who knows what is better and fitter for us than we can do for our selves: for we are many times childish in our Wishes, and too apt to be partial to our selves, longing for things we should not, and desiring that which would do us more harm than good. But God in his Wisdom knows what is proper and fit for us, and out of his Goodness deals out to us such a Portion, as best tends to promote our Welfare; and therefore we ought in point of Interest, as well as Conscience, humbly and thankfully to acquiesce in his Dispensations: for to be dissatisfy'd with our Condition, is in effect to set up our own Judgment above his, and to think our selves wiser than he; yea, to be displeas'd with our Lot, is the ready way to forfeit the Favour of our Maker, and to provoke him, instead of giving more, to withdraw what we have already.

3. The Comfort that accompanies Contentment, together with the Miseries that attend the contrary, are sufficient to make us aim at the one, and abhor the other. A contented Mind is always easy, it creates a constant Calm within, and is attended with an undisturb'd Tranquillity; whereas Discontent

and Envy gall and fret the Mind, and raise a perpetual Storm in the Breast that harbours them. In a word, Content is Happiness, 'tis the blest Estate of Heaven, the Joy of glorify'd Saints, and of the Spirits of just men made perfect, who are not only pleas'd with their own, but delighted with the Joys and Blessedness of one another; whereas Discontent and Envy are the Passions of Hell, the Torment of damned Spirits, whose own Uneasiness makes them, like so many Furies, tear and devour one another.

But, *Lastly*, how may we learn this excellent Art of Contentment? This being a matter of so great consequence both to the publick and private Peace, it will not be amiss to prescribe some Rules for the better attaining of it. And,

1. Because this excellent Vertue is seated chiefly in the Mind, we are to begin there, and endeavour not so much to bring our Condition to our Mind, as our Mind to our Condition. The Reason why so few attain to this Art, is because they take not the right course in learning it: They are indeed solicitous enough to bring their Estates to their Mind, which being too large to be satisfy'd with these earthly things, is a vain attempt, and shews that they go the wrong way to work; for *he that loveth Silver* (saith Solomon) *shall not be satisfy'd with Silver, nor he that loveth abundance with Increase*, Eccl. 5. 10. whereas to move aright in this matter, we must labour to bring our Mind to our Estate, and to rest satisfy'd with it whatever it be, as being the Allotment of that Divine Wisdom and Goodness, that can better judg what is fit for us, than we can for our selves.

2. To be content with our Condition, let us consider the Insufficiency of earthly things to make us happy. 'Tis the fond Mistake of some Persons, to think if they could arrive to such an Estate, or attain to such a degree of Honour, Dignity and Preferment in the World, they should be then happy Men, and would sit down satisfy'd without seeking or desiring any more; whereas when they have attain'd their Wish, they find their Cares and Troubles greater, and themselves more uneasy than they were before: Like Children who imagine, that were they on such a Hill they should touch the Sky; but being got thither, find it as far from them as 'twas before. And therefore *Cyneas* the Philosopher, upon *Pyrrhus's* recounting to him his Designs upon *Rome*, *Sicily* and *Carthage*, pertinently told him, that if he could not be content with his own Kingdom, neither would he be satisfy'd with the whole World. Indeed to seek for satisfac-
tion

tion from these things, is to seek the Living among the Dead ; for they are neither suted to the Nature, nor satisfy the Cravings of a Spirit, they rather increase than allay the Thirst of the Soul : so that let the World flow in ever so fast upon us, our Desires will still run faster, and fly either above or beyond them ; and therefore our Wisdom will be either to bound or fix them upon higher and better things.

3. To learn this Lesson of Contentment, we must subdue all Pride and Haughtiness of Mind ; for he that is highly opinionated of himself, will think he hath not what he deserves, and that will put him upon desiring more, still repining at his own, and envying another's Lot : whereas he that thinks as meanly as he ought of himself, will find that he deserves nothing, and that he lives only upon Alms and Bounty, and that will make him thankful and content with any thing.

4. To be content with our Condition, we must diligently imploy our selves in that Place and Calling wherein God hath set us ; for that will secure us God's Blessing upon our Endeavors, and that will bring us Content : *The Blessing of God* (saith Solomon) *maketh Rich, and bringeth no Sorrow with it* : he who hath that is rich in any condition, and cannot lack a competence. 'Tis Idleness that brings Want, and that gives way to covetous and envious Thoughts ; which Industry in Business chases away, and leaves no leisure or occasion to attend to.

5. To be content with our Estate, we must take care to live within the bounds of it ; for he that goes beyond it, will necessarily run into those Debts that lead to unavoidable Dangers and Discontents : and therefore Frugality, Temperance and Honesty in our dealing have been ever found excellent Helps to Contentment, there being a Blessing annex'd to these things, that brings Peace to the Mind, and Prosperity to our Affairs ; whereas Unthrif and Dishonesty are evermore attended with a Curse, which disquiets the Mind, wafts the Substance, and lays a Foundation for all kind of Misery and Trouble.

6. To get and preserve a contented Mind, we must look more to those that are below, than those that are above us ; the Splendor of Greatness is apt to dazzle the Eye, and to create Envy and Discontent. He that gazeth too much upon the Wealth, Honour and Power of such as are above him, will be easily induc'd to admire their Happiness, and to murmur at his own meaner Condition ; whereas he that looks below him, and considers how
many

many want the good things which he enjoys, will learn to be content and thankful with his own Portion. And therefore to be easy and satisfy'd with thy Lot, suffer not thy Fancy to run so much upon the Glory and Greatness of the World, as upon the Cares and Troubles that attend them. Consider that Nature is contented with a little, and Grace with less: He that lives by the Necessitys of Nature, can scarce be poor, for these are few and easily supply'd; but he that lives by the Cravings of a carnal and sensual Appetite, can never be rich, for these multiply Wants, and make artificial Necessitys, and to give way to these is to drive Contentment from us: For which reason we should learn to bound our Desires, and confine them within the Compass of our own Estate, knowing that *our Life consisteth not in the abundance of the things that we possess*, and that Contentment is more rarely found in a splendid Fortune, than in a moderate and humble one.

Lastly, To attain this Grace of Contentment, we must learn to fix our Trust and Dependence upon God, who hath promis'd never to leave or forsake us; he alone is all-sufficient, and able to satisfy the Cravings of our Souls, and supply the Wants and Necessitys of our Bodys. As for all other things, they leave us destitute when we have most need of them; they stand us in no stead in the time of Sickness, the hour of Death, or the day of Judgment; and afford not the least dram of Comfort when we want the highest Cordials: 'tis God only that is our sutable and sufficient Portion; and therefore the Apostle wills us not to *trust in uncertain Riches, but in the living God, who giveth us all things richly to enjoy*.

Thus I have given you a brief account of what is requir'd, and what is forbidden in this and all the other Commandments; the serious consideration whereof may teach us to end as we began, with an Admiration of the Excellency and Extent of the Divine Law, which (as the Psalmist tells us) *is exceeding broad*, both in the Latitude of its Precepts and Prohibitions: and therefore with him too we ought to make it the Subject of our daily Study and Meditation.

For a close of all, *Let us (as the wise Man directs us) hear the Conclusion of the whole matter, Fear God and keep his Commandments; for this is the whole of Man, Eccles. 12. 13.* This is the whole Duty of Man, which our Saviour hath compriz'd in the Love of God

God and our Neighbour ; and this is the whole Happiness of Man, which will consist in the constant Exercise and Perfection of Both.

DISCOURSE XXIV.

Eccles. 12. 13. Let us hear the Conclusion of the whole matter, Fear God, and keep his Commandments, for this is the whole Duty of Man.

THE next Question in the Catechism, that follows the Commandments, is, *What dost thou chiefly learn by these Commandments ?*

The Answer whereunto is, *I learn two things, my Duty towards God, and my Duty towards our Neighbour.*

For the Explication of this Question and Answer, I have made choice of these words of Solomon, *Let us hear, &c.* Where the wise Man, to summon our Attention,

1. Calls upon us to *hear the Conclusion of the whole Matter.*
2. He sums up our Duty to God, in the *Fear of him* ; and our Duty to our Neighbour, in *keeping his Commandments.* And,
3. Declares of these two, *That they are the whole of Man.*

1. I say, the wise Man, to summon our Attention, here calls upon us to *hear the Conclusion of the whole matter.*

Solomon is, in the beginning of this Book, call'd the Preacher, and this Book of *Ecclesiastes* is the Sermon he preach'd to Mankind. The Text he preach'd upon is in the 2d Verse of the 1st Chapter, *Vanity of Vanities* (saith the Preacher) *all is Vanity* : which words contain the true and severe judgment he pass'd upon all things under the Sun, which he pronounces to be not only vain, but even Vanity it self ; yea to shew the Greatness of their Vanity, he styles them *Vanity of Vanities*, which he doubles and trebles, to set forth the infinite and excessive Vanity of them.

This, in the following part of the Sermon, he proves by many Arguments, and confirms it to us in all the Parts and Instances of earthly Felicity, particularly in the three great Idols of the World, Riches, and Honours, and Pleasures : all which he found by his own Experience to be not only *Vanity*, but *Vexation of Spirit*.

As for Riches, he had Wealth as *plentiful as the Stones in the Street*, 1 Kings 10. 27. and so could want no Advantages to try Experiments of them: He had likewise *Wisdom as large as the Sand of the Sea*, 1 Kings 4. 29. and so was abundantly able to draw Conclusions from them; and yet when he had ranfack'd the whole World, to find what Happiness all the Wealth and Riches of it could afford, he return'd disappointed, and was forc'd to pronounce of it all, *This is also Vanity and Vexation of Spirit*.

As for the Honours of the World, of which he had as large a share as any Mortal, he declares them to be but a *Shadow*, a *Vapour*, a *Wind that passeth away and cometh not again*, yea nothing, *less than nothing, and Vanity*.

For the Pleasures of the World, of which he had the freest and fullest Enjoyment that ever any had, he pronounces of them, that they are all no better than Madness and Folly: *I said of Laughter* (saith he) *that it is mad, and of Mirth what is it?* Ch. 2. ver. 2. meaning, that they were so extremely vain, that he could find nothing in them. And thus having run thro the several Scenes of earthly Felicity, and fully try'd and consider'd all things that the World is wont to prize and pursue for Happiness, in this last Chapter he draws to a Conclusion, ending as he began, with *Vanity of Vanities* (saith the Preacher) *all is Vanity*, Ver. 8. And then for a close of all, wills us to *bear the Conclusion of the whole matter, Fear God, and keep his Commandments, for this is the whole of Man*; where he exempts the Fear of God and Obedience to his Laws, from that Vanity under which he had concluded all other things, and intimates, that nothing but this can give us any true Content and Happiness. And this will lead me, as both the Text and Catechism direct, to consider our Duty to God, and our Duty to our Neighbour; the one being compriz'd in the *Fear of God*, the other in *keeping his Commandments*.

I begin, *First*, with the *Fear of God*, which Solomon stiles, *The Beginning of Wisdom*; and this we shall find to comprize all the Commandments of the first Table, which relate more immediately to our Duty to God.

But what is this Fear of God that directs us in all our Duty and Demeanor towards him? In answer to which, I say, 'tis such an awful Apprehension and Regard of the Divine Majesty, arising from a sense of his infinite Power, Justice and Omnipresence, as makes us careful not to offend him: where,

I stile

I stile it, 1. An awful Apprehension and Regard of the Divine Majesty: This shews the Seat of it, which is within. As all Passions are seated in the Soul; so this religious Fear is more especially rooted in the Heart, and resides in a Mind possess'd with a holy Awe and Dread of a supreme Being.

Again, 2. This holy Awe is said to proceed from a sense of the Divine Justice, Power and Omnipresence; and this shews us the Rise of this religious Fear, which springs from an Apprehension of those Attributes of God, which are apt to strike the Mind with a Fear and Dread of him: for his Justice will not suffer him to acquit the Guilty, his Power is able to inflict the sorest Punishments, and his Omnipresence makes him privy to all our Actions, so that nothing can escape him. And,

Lastly, 'Tis said to be such an awful regard of the Divine Majesty, as keeps us from offending him: This shews us the Effect of this Divine Fear, which is to make us careful to please him by observing his Laws, and fearful of displeasing him by any breach of them; so the wise Man tells us, *The Fear of the Lord is to depart from Evil*, Prov. 16. 17. And the Psalmist, *Stand in awe, and sin not*, Psal. 4. 4. where standing in awe is prescrib'd as the means to prevent sinning against him. He that feareth another, whom he knows able to hurt him, will beware of provoking him; and if we fear God from a sense of his Power, we shall take care how we offend him. For this reason it is that the Fear of God is so often enjoin'd in Holy Scripture, *Fear the Lord all ye his Saints*, saith holy David, Psal. 34. 9. And elsewhere, *Serve the Lord with Fear, and rejoice before him with Trembling*. A good Man is describ'd to be one *that feareth God, and escheweth Evil*; whereas a wicked Person is said to be one, *that hath no Fear of God before his Eyes*: The former is restrain'd by the Fear of God from doing Evil; the latter, having cast off all Awe and Dread of him, hath no check to keep him from the vilest Enormitys. Thus we see something of the Nature and Effects of this Fear of God, and what a Curb it is to restrain us from all sinful Practices: We are now farther to consider it as a brief Summary or Compendium of our Duty to God; and this will be evident, by taking a short View of the Commandments of the first Table, which relate to and contain our Duty to him, together with the Influence that the Fear of God hath upon the observing them all. And,

1. The Fear of God will make us keep to him, and effectually restrain us from *having any other Gods beside or before him*, which is the first Commandment. He that hath this holy Awe and Reverence for the Divine Majesty, will be afraid to offend him, by departing from him into the ways of Atheism and Idolatry, or setting up any Rival Deitys against him. The sense of his Power and Greatness, as our only Lord and Master, will keep us from falling down to any other, and so 'twill learn us that Lesson of our Saviour, *Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve*; and none that have any true knowledge and fear of God, will ever be drawn to do otherwise. Again,

2. The fear of God will keep us from worshipping of him in any way contrary to his Word and Will, as by Images, Pictures, or any vile Representations of him, which is the thing forbidden in the second Commandment. He that truly feareth God, will not worship the Creature instead of the Creator, nor much less give his Glory to graven Images. The sense of God's Jealousy of a Rival, and the Vengeance he hath denounc'd against them and their Posterity that thus shew their Hatred to him, will cause him to avoid all such Image-Worship, and teach him to worship God, as he hath commanded, *in Spirit and Truth*.

3. The fear of God will keep Men from profaning the sacred Name of God, and beget a Veneration for all things that are call'd by it, which is the substance of the third Commandment. 'Tis the want of this holy Fear and Reverence, that makes Men venture so boldly to take God's Name in vain, by rash and false Swearing, to invade his Property by Sacrilege, to despise his Ministers by withholding the Portion he hath allotted them, to pollute his Sanctuary by Profaneness, and to think so meanly of Persons, Places and Things consecrated and call'd by his Name: whereas did we stand in awe of God as we ought, we should not venture in any of these ways to sin against him; did we truly believe that *the Lord will not hold them guiltless that thus take his Name in vain*, we should honour his holy Name more, and avoid all the ways of dishonouring and detracting from it.

Lastly, The fear of God will make us to *remember the Sabbath-day to keep it Holy*, and to have a due regard to the times set apart and devoted to his Service, which is the thing requir'd in the fourth Commandment. If the fear of God be before our Eyes, we shall not profane those days by following the Works of our Calling, and much less by following the Works of Sin; but rather

ther make Conscience of resting at those times from all our Labours, the better to attend the Worship of God, and the Exercises of our holy Religion: especially considering the liberal allowance that God hath given us of six days in the Week for our own use, and reserving only one day in seven for his own Service. And sure he that hath any fear of God, or any honour for him, will be both afraid and asham'd to deny him this. Thus we see how the Fear of God runs thro the first Table of the Law, and at once comprizes and enforces the Dutys we owe to God.

The next thing we are to consider, is the Dutys we owe to our Neighbour, and they are contain'd in the Commandments of the Second Table, and are perform'd by keeping them.

As, 1. By keeping the fifth Commandment we observe our Duty to all our Superiours; which is, to *honour our Parents*, both Natural and Civil, and to *obey those that are set over us*, both in Church and State: to which we are encourag'd by the Promise of a long Life here, and an eternal Life of Glory hereafter.

2. By keeping the sixth Commandment, we perform the Duty we owe to the Lives of one another, and that both of Body and Soul; which is, to take the best care we can of the Health, Safety and Welfare of both, and to avoid all the ways of maiming, murdering and destroying of either.

3. By keeping the seventh Commandment, we observe the Duty we owe to our Neighbour's Wife; which is, to abstain from all Uncleanness in Thought, Word and Deed, to *keep our Vessels in Sanctification and Honour*, to preserve a pure and inviolable Chastity, and to be true to all the Laws and Promises of Wedlock.

4. By keeping the eighth Commandment, we perform the Duty we owe to the Goods or Substance of our Neighbour: which is, not to *Steal*, by taking away any thing from him, or withholding any thing that is due to him; not to over-reach him by any Methods of Fraud or Deceit, nor to lessen his Substance by any ways of Robbery or Oppression: but rather to use our best Endeavours to preserve and increase his Substance, by doing him all the Right and Service we can, and by all good means to promote and advance his Prosperity.

5. By keeping the ninth Commandment, we observe the Duty we owe to the Credit and good Name of our Neighbour: which is, not to blast it by bearing false Witness, Lying, or any publick Slanders and Defamation; nor undermine it, by secret Whisper-

ing, Talebearing and Backbiting : but as much as in us lies, to silence all vilifying and detracting Language of other Men, to vindicate them from unjust Aspersions, and as far as we may, preserve and promote the Fame and Reputation of one another.

Lastly, By keeping the tenth Commandment, we are kept from all unjust coveting or desiring any thing that is our Neighbour's, and much more from all unlawful ways and means of making it our own ; being content with what is truly and honestly ours, and willing that all others should enjoy what is theirs.

Thus as our Duty to God is included in the *Fear* of him, so is our Duty to our Neighbour contain'd in *keeping the Commandments* ; which two things are here recommended to us by the wisest of Men, from the Fulness and Comprehensiveness of them, the last thing in the Text, *For this is the whole of Man.*

Which Words admit of, and are interpreted in divers Senses.

As, 1. This is the whole *Duty* or Business of Man, so our *English* Translation renders it, tho the word *Duty* is not in the Original or other Translations. And so the sense is, this is the whole Work and Business incumbent upon Man, and about which we are to employ our selves in this World : not that we are to neglect the Dutys of our Calling, and to have our Minds always and only fix'd upon these Acts of Religion ; but that this is the main and chief Business we are to be conversant about, and in all other matters we must have an eye to this, referring all to it, and preferring it above all. To do otherwise, is with *Martha*, to be *cumber'd about many things, and to forget the one thing necessary.* And whereas the Duties of particular Callings belong not to all, but are distributed among many, as their Abilitys and Education lead them ; this of *fearing God and keeping his Commandments* is of universal Concern, and extends to all : *Hoc est omnis Homo*, this concerns every one, and none is exempted from it ; and this is *totum hominis*, the whole Duty, or the principal Business that belongs to him.

2. Others render the words, This is the whole *End* of Man, or the course to which every Man is design'd, so the *Syriack* ; This ought to be the way and course of all Mankind, so the *Targum* : so the sense is, This was the end for which God gave Man Faculties above other Creatures, that he should honour, fear and obey him ; and that he hath distinguish'd him from them, not so much by Reason, of which there are some kind of Footsteps and Similitudes in Brutes, as by Religion and the Fear of God, of which there

there are not the least Signs or Degrees to be found among them ; and so this is at once the whole Essence and the whole End of Man.

Lastly, Others render the words, This is the whole *Happiness* of Man ; This is what will be most profitable and advantageous to all Men, so the *Arabick*. So the sense is, This is all that is requisite to qualify and prepare us for Happiness, and secure to us our future Bliss ; the fearing of God, and keeping his Commandments, being the only means to raise our Natures to their highest perfection, and to bring them to a Likeness and Conformity to the Divine Nature, which only the Practice of Religion and Vertue is able to do : so that this is, in all the foremention'd Senses, the whole of Man, being the whole Work and Business, the whole End and Design, and the whole Interest and Happiness of Man : All which are so many powerful Arguments to persuade to the Practice of it.

1. Then, Let us learn from what hath been said to live always in the fear of God, and that will keep us to our Duty to him : To which end let us, with the Psalmist, *set him always before us, that we may never be mov'd to do Evil*. Let us often meditate upon the infinite Power of God, who is able to punish all our Offences committed against him, and that may strike Terror into all Offenders ; and therefore our Saviour warns us *whom to fear, not Men*, whose Power can reach no farther than the Body or Goods, but *fear him who can destroy both Body and Soul in Hell*, I say unto you *fear him*, Luke 12. 45. And that will help us to have more the fear of God than Men before our Eyes.

Again, Let us ponder upon his impartial Justice, that he cannot spare those that wilfully defy him. Moreover, let us frequently call to mind his infinite Mercy and Kindness to us, and that may teach us to *fear the Lord for his Goodness*, and make us not only afraid, but ashamed to offend him.

2. Let us live in constant Obedience to his Commandments, and that will keep us to our Duty to our Neighbour, and thereby keep a Conscience void of Offence, both towards God and towards Man. I shall conclude with Moses's Saying to the Israelites, *And now, O Israel, what doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, to walk in his ways, to serve the Lord thy God, and to keep his Commandments ?* Deut. 10. 12. Which is Solomon's Conclusion here of the whole matter, *Fear God, and keep his Commandments, for this is the whole of Man* ; which he backs with
thee

the Thoughts of an approaching Day, when God shall bring every Work into Judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be Good, or whether it be Evil.

DISCOURSE XXV.

Mat. 22. 37, 38. *Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy Heart, and with all thy Soul, and with all thy Mind. This is the first and the great Commandment.*

MOSESES contracted the whole Law into Ten Words, call'd therefore the Decalogue or Ten Commandments, the great Subject of the foregoing Exposition.

Solomon after reduc'd them to two, viz. the fear of God, and the keeping the Commandments, which he makes the whole of Man.

But a greater than Moses and Solomon, even our blessed Saviour, has reduc'd them all to one, and made Love the fulfilling of the Law, or a brief Summary of the Law and the Prophets. Now this Love has a double Object, God and our Neighbour, which are the two Hinges upon which the whole Law turns, as will appear by considering the two following Questions of the Catechism.

The first whereof is, *What is thy Duty towards God?* The Answer whereunto is, *To believe in him, to fear him, to love him with all the Heart, Soul and Mind, to worship him, to give him Thanks, to put our whole Trust in him, to call upon him, to honour his holy Name and Word, and to serve him truly all the days of our Life:* All which are comprehended in the Love of God, and best perform'd by it; as we shall see by handling these words of our Saviour, *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy Heart, and with all thy Soul, and with all thy Mind: This is the first and the great Commandment.*

For the better understanding whereof, we must note, That Love in general is that Passion of the Soul which unites it to a beloved Object. It has two Acts that constantly attend it, a desire to please, and a desire to enjoy.

The Love of God is such a holy Disposition of Mind, as inclines it to seek the closest Union and Communion with him. It hath two great Motives or Inducements to it, the infinite Goodness of God in himself, and his transcendent Goodness or Kindness to us: *he is Good, and he does Good*; both which are Cords strong enough to draw, and to fasten our Affections to him.

And this Love of God must not be lukewarm and languishing, but intire and intense to the highest Degree. It must be *with all the Heart*; that is, with the whole bent of the Will and Affections: *With all the Soul*; that is, with all the Powers of the animal and sensitive Soul: *And with all the Mind*; that is, with the Understanding and Faculties of the rational Soul. St. Luke adds, *and with all our Strength*; that is, with all the Powers and Members of the Body, which are not to be the *Instruments of Sin*, as too many make them, but the *Instruments of Righteousness unto God*. Thus the most superlative Being requires and deserves our most superlative Love, which contains and draws on our whole Duty to God, as will appear by considering the several Acts and Parts of it, mention'd in the Catechism. As,

1. The Love of God includes the *believing in him*; which is the first and principal Duty we owe to him, and indeed the Foundation of all the rest, being all grounded upon the Belief and Acknowledgment of a God; for *he that cometh unto God, must believe that he is, and that he is a Rewarder of them that diligently seek him*, Heb. 11. 6. So that this believing in him hath two Branches, the Belief of his Being, and the Belief of his Word; that he is, and that all that he hath said is perfectly true. The Belief of his Being is founded upon his Works both of Creation and Providence, upon the universal Consent of all Mankind in all Times and Ages, and upon the Acts and Testimony of Conscience, which are all so many Witnesses of him.

The Belief of his Word is founded upon the Veracity of the Speaker, together with the Miracles and Prophecies that confirm it. Now all this is compriz'd and suppos'd in the Love of God; for none can love one whom he does not believe, and *without Faith 'tis as impossible to love as it is to please him*. Every Passion of the Soul supposes an Object about which it is conversant; and consequently, the loving of God must imply that he is, and that he is truly lovely, and that will draw on a firm belief both of his Being and his Word. Again,

2. The Love of God includes the *Fear* of him, another Duty we owe to him; for he that truly loves any, will be not only
careful

careful to please, but fearful of displeasing the beloved Object. What the Fear of God is, hath been shew'd in the foregoing Discourse, *viz.* such an awful regard of the divine Majesty, as keeps us from offending him; and that this proceeds from a Principle of Love is evident from all those Places of Scripture, where the Fear of God is coupled with the Love of him. When St. John tells us, that *there is no fear in Love, but perfect Love casteth out Fear, and he that feareth is not made perfect in Love*: it must be understood of a base servile fear of Slaves to a Tyrannical Master, which proceeds only from a dread of Punishment; not of a filial fear of Sons to a kind Father, which proceeds from Love, and a sense of Duty to him.

3. The Love of God includes the *Worshipping of him*; that this is a Duty owing to him, is plain from the words of our Saviour, *Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve*, Mat. 4. Now this Worship is that Homage and Fealty we are to pay to God, as our great Creator and Preserver: 'tis the Acknowledgment and Adoration of his infinite Power, Justice, Wisdom and Goodness; the celebrating and extolling those transcendent and adorable Perfections we believe to be in him, and the demeaning our selves towards him accordingly. All which Acts of Worship spring from the Love of God, without which the most pompous shew of them are rather abominable, than acceptable to him.

4. The Love of God includes the great duty of *Thankfulness to him* for all his Mercies and Blessings: these lay upon us a Debt of acknowledgment and requital to the best of our Power; and because we can make no answerable returns for his manifold and inestimable Favors, we are to be daily setting forth his Praises, magnifying his Mercies towards us, and rendring to him our Tribute of Obedience for them: all which must proceed from a Breast inflam'd with Love for his unspeakable Goodness. And of this the Psalmist, that great Master of Thanksgivings, hath set us the most admirable Pattern for our Imitation.

5. The Love of God includes a *Trust and Confidence in him*, another Duty we owe to him. None will trust one that he hates, and every one is willing to confide in a Friend whom he loves; all Trust is founded upon the Kindness and Fidelity of him on whom we rely, and evermore flows from the Love and Belief of them. *They that know thy Name* (saith the Psalmist) *to be Elshaddai, a God All-sufficient, infinitely Gracious and*
Mer-

Merciful, will put their Trust in thee, for thou never failest them that love thee, Psal. 9. God's Love to us is the main Motive of his Favour, and Readiness to help us; and our Love to him intitles us to his Care and Protection. Mutual Love begets a mutual Confidence in one another; and as one Coal kindles another, so the fire of Love in one Man's breast occasions a warm and lively hope of Confidence in the breast of another.

In short, a due Apprehension of the Truth and Faithfulness, with other divine Excellencies that are in God, first beget a Love of him, and that begets a Trust and Affiance in him, the latter being included and deriv'd from the former.

6. The Love of God includes the *Calling upon him*, and making our Requests known to him, another Duty we owe to him.

As we are to praise God for Blessings receiv'd, so are we to pray to him for the Mercies we want; and this a true Love of God and our selves will evermore dispose us to do. 'Tis the property of Love to open the Heart and the Mouth too, and to pour out the Soul and Mind of the beloved Party; and if we are rightly affected towards God, we shall frequently address to, and call upon him. So we find David did, *Psal. 55. 17, 18. As for me, I will call upon God, and he shall save me: In the Evening and Morning, and at Noon-day will I pray, and that instantly, and he shall hear my Voice.* This God expects from us, and hath promis'd to bless it; *Call upon me in the time of Trouble, and I will hear thee, and thou shalt praise me,* Psal. 50. 15. And this must proceed from a Principle of Love, and be done heartily and affectionately to him; for God abhors all heartless Petitions, and the loudest Calls and Crys to him will find no Audience or Acceptance, where the Heart is wanting.

7. The Love of God includes the *Honoring of his Holy Name and Word*, another Duty we are to pay to him. Honor in general is an inward Esteem and Veneration of some Excellency in the Person or Thing honored, express'd by some outward tokens of Respect and Reverence to it. The honoring of God's holy Name, is the thinking and speaking honorably of all his Titles, Attributes and other things that belong to him, and keeping them from all Contempt and Profanation; and this is the effect of a true and intire Love to him. He that loves another will be pleas'd at the mentioning of him, and cannot hear him disparag'd or evil spoken of: *They that love thy Name* (saith the Psalmist) *will be joyful in thee,* Psal. 5. 11. they will delight in the

Praises, and be uneasy at the abuse of his Holy Name. Moreover, the honoring of God's Word is the setting a high Price and Value upon the Holy Scriptures, esteeming them the Dictates of a divine Spirit, and the infallible Oracles of God, and so making them the Rule of our Lives, and the Subject of our daily Study and Meditation. And this too proceeds from the Love of God, which inclines us to honor and reverence whatever comes from him: *Oh how I love thy Law!* (saith David) and then it follows, *'tis my Meditation all the Day.* We think much and often upon what we love, and can scarce let it slip out of our Mind: *Thy Word* (saith the Psalmist) *is dearer to me than multitudes of Gold and Silver; yea, sweeter than the Honey or Honey-comb:* And all from the dear Affection he bore to him that gave it.

Lastly, The Love of God includes *the serving of him truly all the days of our Life*, another great Duty we owe to him. This is a constant effect of Love, and indeed the chief sign of the reality of it. *Jacob served for Rachel seven Years, and they seemed but a few Days to him, for the Love that he bore to her,* Gen. 29. 20. And if we truly love God, we shall not think it much to *serve him truly all the days of our Life.* Where two Qualifications are assign'd of the Service we are to pay to him, viz. it must be true and sincere, *not in Word and in Tongue* only, which is but Compliment and Hypocrisy, but *in Deed and in Truth*, which alone can manifest the reality of it. And it must be constant, and continue to our Lives end; not serving him sometimes, and then changing our Master, but keeping to him and abiding in his Service to our Lives end. And indeed the Service of our whole Lives is all little enough for the Wages, and comes vastly short of the Reward he hath allotted for it: And did we understand matters aright, and bear that Affection we ought to our Maker, we should reckon no other Service fit to be nam'd or compar'd with it.

Thus we see the whole Duty we owe to God, as 'tis sum'd up in the Commandments and Catechism; and that the Love of God comprizes and runs through all the several Parts and Acts of it.

And this our Saviour here stiles *the first and the great Commandment*, the last thing to be consider'd in our Text. Now this is stil'd the first Commandment,

1. In order of Time, this being the first thing to be taught and learn'd by us: for true Religion begins with the Love of God, and is founded upon it. What *Solomon* saith of the Fear, is true

†

like-

likewise of the Love of God, that 'tis *the beginning of Wisdom*; 'tis the first step we are to make towards him, and that will lead us on to all the other parts of our Duty and Obedience to him. He that sets out betimes with the Love of God, will move on chearfully ever after in the ways of his Commandments; whereas they that do not begin early with the Knowledg and Love of him, will be still *erring and straying from him like lost Sheep*. So that our first and principal Care should be to set our Hearts right towards God, and to turn the whole stream and bent of our Affections to him, and that will help to keep us right in the whole course of our Lives ever after; and therefore Solomon advises to *train up Children betimes in the way that they should go, and when they are Old they will not depart from it*: And our Saviour directs to *seek first the Kingdom of God, and the Righteousness thereof, and then we shall not need to be too solicitous about lesser Matters*, Prov. 22. 6. Mat. 6. 33.

2. The Love of God is the first Commandment, not only in order of Time, but in order of Nature, because this is the Root from whence all other Vertues grow, or the Spring from whence they all flow. This hath been prov'd in the foregoing Part of this Discourse, where all the Fear, Honor and Worship, all the Thankfulness, Trust and Service we owe to our Maker, like so many Streams, issue from this Fountain of divine Love. And as this is therefore said to be the first, so is it likewise stil'd the great Commandment: And that,

3. In order of Dignity, upon the account of the transcendent greatness of the Object about which it is conversant, which is no less than God himself, the highest and noblest of all Beings; for tho all the Commandments have some Relation to him, having God for their Author, yet there is none that so immediately refers to him as this of Love, having his divine Nature and Perfections for its Object, which give it a Value and Preeminence above the rest.

4. This is call'd the first and great Commandment on the account of the largeness and comprehensiveness of it, because it contains all other Graces that have any relation unto God.

And as all Moral Vertues are said to be knit together in Prudence, so all Theological Graces are join'd and meet in this divine Love: for which Reason it is sometimes call'd the *Old Commandment*, because it was from the beginning; sometimes a *New Commandment*, because renew'd and reinforc'd by Christ; some-

times *all the Commandments*, because it comprizes and runs thro them all; the Love of God being the great Wheel that moves all our Obedience to him, which is therefore call'd *the first and great Commandment*.

5. On the account of the Influence it has upon all other parts and acts of Religion, which receive all their Worth and Acceptance intirely from this: for where the Love of God is, there every thing, even the meanest Services, are accepted; but where that is wanting, nothing, even the greatest and most solemn Performances, can find any liking or acceptance with him. So the Apostle declares at large concerning Charity in 1 Cor. 13.

Lastly, The Love of God is *the great Commandment* upon the account of its Duration, which is Permanent and Everlasting: for tho *Prophecies may fail*, and *Tongues may cease*, and all other *Knowledg may be done away*; yea, tho other Graces of the Spirit may have an End, as Faith which will be swallow'd up in Vision, and Hope which will end in Fruition; yet *Charity will never fail*, and the *Love of God abideth for ever*: 'twill go with us into the other World, and there make up a great part of our Felicity.

To draw to a Conclusion: Since the *Love of God* is in all these respects the *first and the great Commandment*, let us all in the

First place, as we are here taught, *love the Lord our God with all our Heart, and with all our Soul, and with all our Mind*; which contains and leads to the whole Duty we owe to him. To this End let us frequently meditate on the transcendent Excellencies and Perfections of the divine Majesty, which render him infinitely lovely in himself; but especially on his superlative Bounty and Goodness, which make him in the highest measure amiable unto us, and we shall find it difficult to resist such powerful Charms. But because too many flatter themselves that they love God, and would think themselves unworthy to live should they do otherwise, it will be requisite to try the Truth and Sincerity of it. Now the best Test and Touchstone hereof are God's Commandments; for as a Tree is best known by its Fruit, so is our Love best discern'd by the Effects of it. Bring then your Lives and Actions to the Rule of God's Commandments: if they are conformable to this, 'tis a good Sign that the Love of God dwelleth in you; if it be otherwise, deceive not your selves, there is no Truth in it.

This our Saviour himself hath made the Trial of it, *John 14. 15. If ye love me, keep my Commandments*. And St. John assures

†

us,

us, that *this is the Love of God, that we walk after his Commandments;*
1 John 5. 3.

But since sad Experience teaches, that the World is apt to take too great a Possession of our Hearts, and to draw them from God by the force of its Charms and Temptations, we are to watch against all the Poms and Vanities of it; but above all, we are to put up our Prayers unto God, that he would arm us against all the Temptations of the World, the Flesh and the Devil; that he would plant his Fear, and shed abroad his Love into our Hearts, and by thus loving him here we shall live with him for ever hereafter.

DISCOURSE XXVI.

Mat. 22. 39, 40. *And the Second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy Neighbour as thy self: On these two Commandments hang all the Law, and the Prophets.*

I Shew'd in my last, *our Duty to God*; which our Saviour in the foregoing verse sum'd up in the *Love of him*. I come now To our *Duty to our Neighbour*; which is here compriz'd likewise in the *Love of him*. As we shall see in the

Next Question in the Catechism, which is, *What is thy Duty to thy Neighbour?*

The Answer whereunto is, *To love my Neighbour as my Self.*

And that will include and draw on the other things after mention'd, viz. *To do unto all Men as I would they should do unto me: To love, honor and succour my Father and Mother. To honor and obey the King, and all that are put in Authority under him. To submit my self to all my Governors, Teachers, Spiritual Pastors and Masters. To order my self lowly and reverently to all my Betters. To hurt no Body in Word or Deed; to be true and just in all my Dealings; to keep my Hands from Picking and Stealing, and my Tongue from Evil speaking, Lying and Slandering; to keep my Body in Temperance, Soberness and Chastity; not to covet or desire other Mens Goods, but to learn and labor truly to get my own Living, and to do my Duty in that State of Life wherein it shall please God to call me.*

These

These are the principal Heads of the Duty we owe to one another, all which are compriz'd in these few words, *Thou shalt love thy Neighbour as thy Self*; which is here said to be the *second Commandment, and like unto the first*.

'Tis the second Commandment, in the order of Number and of Dignity; and 'tis like unto the first, in respect of the Authority that commands it, which is the same in both; and likewise in respect of the Extent and Comprehensiveness of it. For as the

First contains our whole Duty to God, so this Second contains our whole Duty to our Neighbour; which will appear by considering the several Parts of it, as before rehears'd. And,

1. The Love of our Neighbour wills us to *do unto all Men as we would they should do unto us*. This is a dictate of Nature, and a Principle taught and suggested to us by the common Reason of Mankind, who have allow'd the Equity, Justice, and the Usefulness of it. And therefore we find the wiser Heathens commending and practising of it, from no higher Light than that of Nature and Reason.

But our Blessed Saviour, to urge and enforce the Obligation of it upon all his Followers, hath adopted it into Christianity, and made it a Principle of his revealed Religion, as may be seen in his divine Sermon on the Mount, *Mat. 7. 12. Luke 6. 31*. Now this Rule directs us to substitute our selves in one anothers Places, and to make our Neighbour's Case our own; and then consider, what we could reasonably desire in their Circumstances, and so to make that the Measure of our Actions and Dealings with them, that now labor under them. This will shew us the Equity and Reasonableness of this Golden Rule, of doing as we would be done by, and effectually perswade to all Acts of Justice and Charity to one another in all Conditions.

Moreover, this will convince us of the Goodness of God, in laying such easy and equitable Commands upon us, in making our own Desires the standard of our Doings to others: So that he may justly reason with us as he did of old with the *Israelites, Are not my ways equal?* in requiring you to do no more to others, than you would desire your selves in their Circumstances, which may happen to be yours you know not how soon. *And are not your ways unequal?* if you should think or do otherwise. Again,

2. To love our Neighbour as our Selves, will teach us to love, honor and succour our Father and Mother. The word Neighbour here extends to all Mankind; in the first Rank whereof we
are

are to reckon our Parents both Natural and Civil, who next under God are to have the greatest share of our Honor and Affection. Nature it self enclines us to love our Parents, to whom we stand related in the nearest tye of Consanguinity and Blood, being *Bone of their Bone, and Flesh of their Flesh.*

And this Love is to be exprest by all the Tokens of Honor, Reverence and Obedience to them; looking upon them as the Instruments of our Being, and paying them our Respects accordingly: but above all we are to succour and relieve them in case of want and necessity; considering the great Care they took of us in our Infancy and helpless State, which because we cannot sufficiently requite, we are to pray to God to multiply his Blessings upon them. This all Parents desire and expect from their Children, and therefore they should be careful to set them a good Example by paying it to their own, which is but to do as we would be done by, and to love our Neighbour as our Selves: they that do otherwise are void of natural Affection, which is a sad Symptom of a reprobate Mind.

3. The Love of our Neighbour obliges us to *Honor and Obey the King, and all that are put in Authority under him*; for these two come under the stile and notion of Neighbour, whose higher Station requires us to love them not only as, but for our Selves, our own as well as others Welfare being wrapt up and concern'd in theirs. The Prince's Honor is the Peoples Safety, for *he is the breath of our Nostrils*, and the Protector of our Lives and Fortunes; the Commonwealth lives and breathes in him.

If he be safe and prosperous, the Subjects are happy; if any Misfortune betide him, they are soon involv'd in Misery and Confusion; his Fall, like that of the tall Cedars, shaking the whole Earth. So that to love him, is to love our selves; and the Honor we pay him, is repay'd again in the benefit and comfort of his Protection. And therefore the Apostle wills to us *pray for Kings and all that are in Authority, that we may lead quiet and peaceable Lives in all Godliness and Honesty*; which cannot be done without them: for which Reason St. Peter hath coupled together the *Fear of God*, and the *Honor of the King*. And St. Paul minds us to be *subject to Principalities and Powers, and to obey Magistrates*, which is no more than what we our selves would expect in their Conditions.

4. To love our Neighbour as our selves, requires us to *submit to all our Governors, Teachers, Spiritual Pastors and Masters*: for all these

these are appointed for our good, and attend continually on this very thing: to submit to them, is to hearken to their Instructions, and to bear their Corrections. As for *Governors*, they are said to be *the Ministers of God to us for good*, ordain'd for the *Punishment of Evil doers, and the Praise of them that do well*.

As for *Teachers*, they are such as bring up others in the Knowledge of any useful Arts or Literature, as Tutors or Instructors. Spiritual Pastors are those whom Christ hath set apart to guide and to feed his Flock.

Masters are such as have Authority over others, as their Servants and Dependants. All which in their several Stations and Functions are to be own'd and submitted to; that is, Subjects are to yield to the Power and Punishments of Governors in the State; Scholars to the Doctrine and Discipline of Teachers in the Schools or places of Education; the People to the Directions and Admonitions of Spiritual Pastors and Ministers in the Church; and Servants to the Commands and Counsels of Masters in the Family. Which things the Love of our Neighbour and our Selves must engage us to, both for the publick and private good of one another. These Lessons will be better learnt by the next Duty we owe to our Neighbor; which is,

5. *To order our selves lowly and reverently to all our Betters.*

By our Betters here we are to understand,

First, All that are above us in any Office either in Church or State.

Secondly, All those that are before us in Age and Experience. And,

Lastly, All that are above us in Parts or Learning.

All these in their several kinds have a sort of Superiority over us, and so are to be look'd upon and accounted our Betters.

But what is it to order our selves lowly and reverently towards them? Why, That in general imports a humble, decent and respectful Behaviour to them. More particularly,

For those that are above us in any Office of Ruling and Teaching of us, we are to honor their Persons, and receive their Instructions. So we are commanded to reverence *all that are in Authority*, and to count those worthy of double Honor that labor in the Word and Doctrine, and to esteem them highly for their Works sake.

For those that are before us in Age and Experience, we are to shew a due respect to them, as the Directors of Youth, and to listen to their Counsel and Admonitions. Lastly,

For

For those that are above us in Parts and Learning, we are to pay a due deference to their better Judgments ; having an inward Regard to them in our Minds, and outwardly demeaning our selves towards them with Humility and Observance ; not setting up our weak Opinions above theirs, or preferring our Humors and vain Conceits before their greater Wisdom.

These things the great Vertue of Christian Modesty, and the good Order and Government of the World exact from us, and are but what we our selves in their Places and Circumstances would expect from others.

6. To love our Neighbour as our selves, will teach us to *hurt no body by word or deed* ; that is, not to say or do any thing to the prejudice of any other Person, and that because we our selves are most unwilling to receive any Injury from them. Now Men, you know, may be hurt several ways ; as in their Body, by Violence and Bloodshed ; in their Soul, by creating to it any unnecessary Grief or Trouble ; in their Goods, by Rapine and Oppression ; in their Name, by Talebearing and Backbiting, and the like : from all which the loving our Neighbour as our selves is the most effectual Preservative, since none can wish so ill to himself, as to desire such Usage ; but are rather mov'd to complain and seek redress when 'tis done to them. And since all Men are fond of the Health and Welfare of their Bodies, of the Quiet and Comfort of their Souls, of the Prosperity of their Estates, and the Preservation of their good Names ; to love our Neighbour as our selves, will be the best Motive to promote these things in all others ; for *Love worketh no ill to his Neighbour*.

7. To love our Neighbour as our selves, will teach men to *be true and just in all their dealings*. There is none but desires Truth in mens Words, Faithfulness in Promises, Fidelity in Trusts, Justice in Bargains and Contracts, and Honesty in all Dealings, where themselves are concern'd. Now 'tis but to pay that to others which we expect from them, and all these things will be effectually secur'd and practis'd in our Entercourse with one another. We shall then render to every one their Dues, because we look for the same our selves from all others ; and shall be unwilling to over-reach and defraud any, which of all things we abhor should be done to us.

8. To love our Neighbour as our selves, will cause us to *bear no Malice or Hatred in our heart*. Malice is such an evil Disposition of Mind, as prompts Men to the doing all possible mischief : 'tis call'd

in Latin *Malitia*, that is, not only wicked, but Wickedness it self, being the highest kind of Wickedness in the world ; for 'tis a delight in working Evil to another, tho a man get nothing by it himself : which is the Humor of the Devil, to labor hard, not to bring any good to himself, but mischief and ruin to others. *Hatred* is a Vice much of the same nature, and hath much the same effects ; for it is griev'd at any Good that happens to another, and rejoices in every Calamity that befalls him. 'Tis a lasting Anger, accompany'd with Desires and Designs of Revenge, and ends many times in Murder and Bloodshed. Now a true Love of our Neighbour as our selves will root out these black and mischievous Passions, which are but a Torment to those who harbor them. They cannot dwell in a Breast where Love and Vertue reign, no more than Fire and Water, Light and Darkeness, can abide together. And such as give way to them, are left by the Holy Spirit of God, and led only by the accursed Crew of the evil and envious Spirits.

9. To love our Neighbour as our selves, will keep our hands from picking and stealing. This Vertue will give us such a Sense of one another's Property, as will not suffer us to invade it in the smallest things, and much less in greater and weightier matters. The Portion allotted to every one by the Laws of the Country, is what God himself by his Deputys hath assign'd to them; and as we would not have any to diminish our Stock or break in upon our Goods by the unjust ways of Theft and Robbery, so ought we to be equally tender of the Rights and Properties of others, not using our hands in taking any thing from them, nor defiling our fingers with any unjust Gain. Yea, we must first extinguish the Love of God and our Neighbour, and put out the Light even of natural Reason and Equity, before we can make so bold with any thing that is another's.

10. To love our Neighbour as our selves, will keep our Tongues from Evil speaking, Lying, and Slandering. The Tongue was given us to set forth the Glory of God, and to set forward the Good of our Neighbour : and when 'tis us'd to those ends, 'tis truly stil'd the Glory of a Man ; but when 'tis us'd to the contrary ways of dishonoring God, and disparaging our Neighbour, it then becomes a Shame and a Reproach to him. And as a true Love to God will keep us from all ways of dishonoring him ; so a true Love to our Neighbour will restrain us from all the ways of vilifying and defaming him. Of the latter of which we have three ways

ways here mention'd : By *Evil speaking*, that is, by lessening or detracting from any : By *Lying*, that is, by falsifying in Words and Promises : By *Slandering*, that is, by raising or spreading evil Reports of him. All these are gross Abuses of Speech ; and our Saviour tells us, that of all such *idle and evil words we must give an account at the last Day*. Now a true Love to our Neighbour as our selves, will help to take out the Sting and Venom of the Tongue, by considering our own Unwillingness to be under the lash of it ; and so to avoid all that rash Judging, Lying, and Slandering of others, which our selves should be loth to receive or bear from them.

11. To love our Neighbour as our selves, will help to *keep our Body in Temperance, Soberness, and Chastity*. A true Love to our selves will teach us to preserve the Health of our Bodies and the Peace of our Souls, by a temperate Use of God's Creatures, and an unspotted Chastity ; and likewise to avoid the contrary Vices, that tend to the hurt and impairing of either. And if we bear the same or like Affection to our Neighbour as we do to our selves, we shall tender the Welfare of his Body and Soul as we do our own, and not draw him into the Vices of Intemperance, Drunkenness or Uncleanness, which are so pernicious to both.

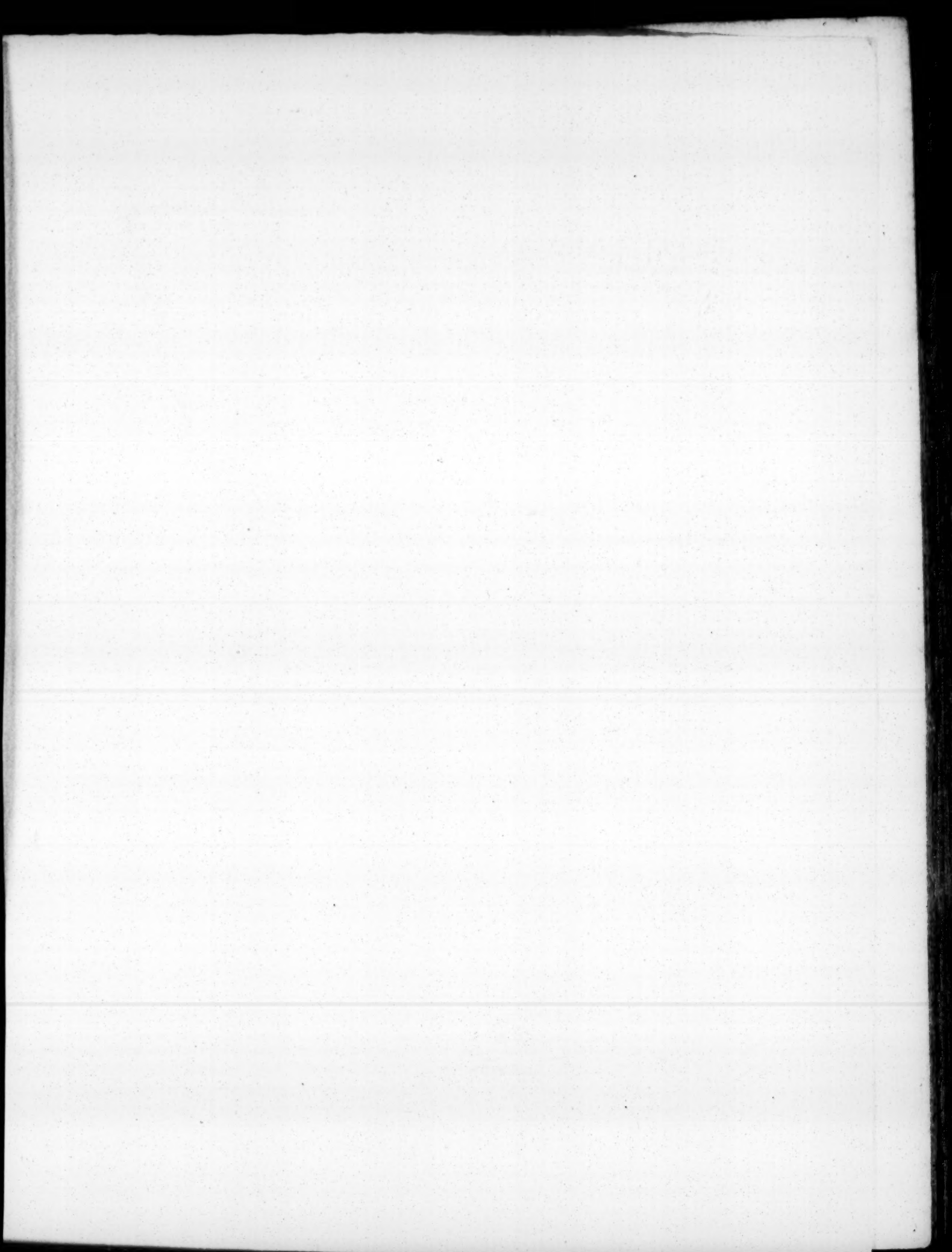
Lastly, To love our Neighbour as our selves, will teach us *not to covet or desire other mens Goods, but to learn and labor truly to get our own living, and to do our Duty in that state of Life unto which it shall please God to call us*. The Sense whereof is, that this will keep not only our Hands from picking and stealing, but our Hearts from all inordinate coveting or hankering after any thing that is another's ; but rather to use our utmost Diligence and Industry in the business of some lawful Calling, to get a true and honest Livelihood of our own : And if it shall please God to call us to any Office or Employment publick or private, faithfully to discharge the Duty of it, and to *exercise our selves therein, to keep a Conscience void of Offence both towards God and towards Men*.

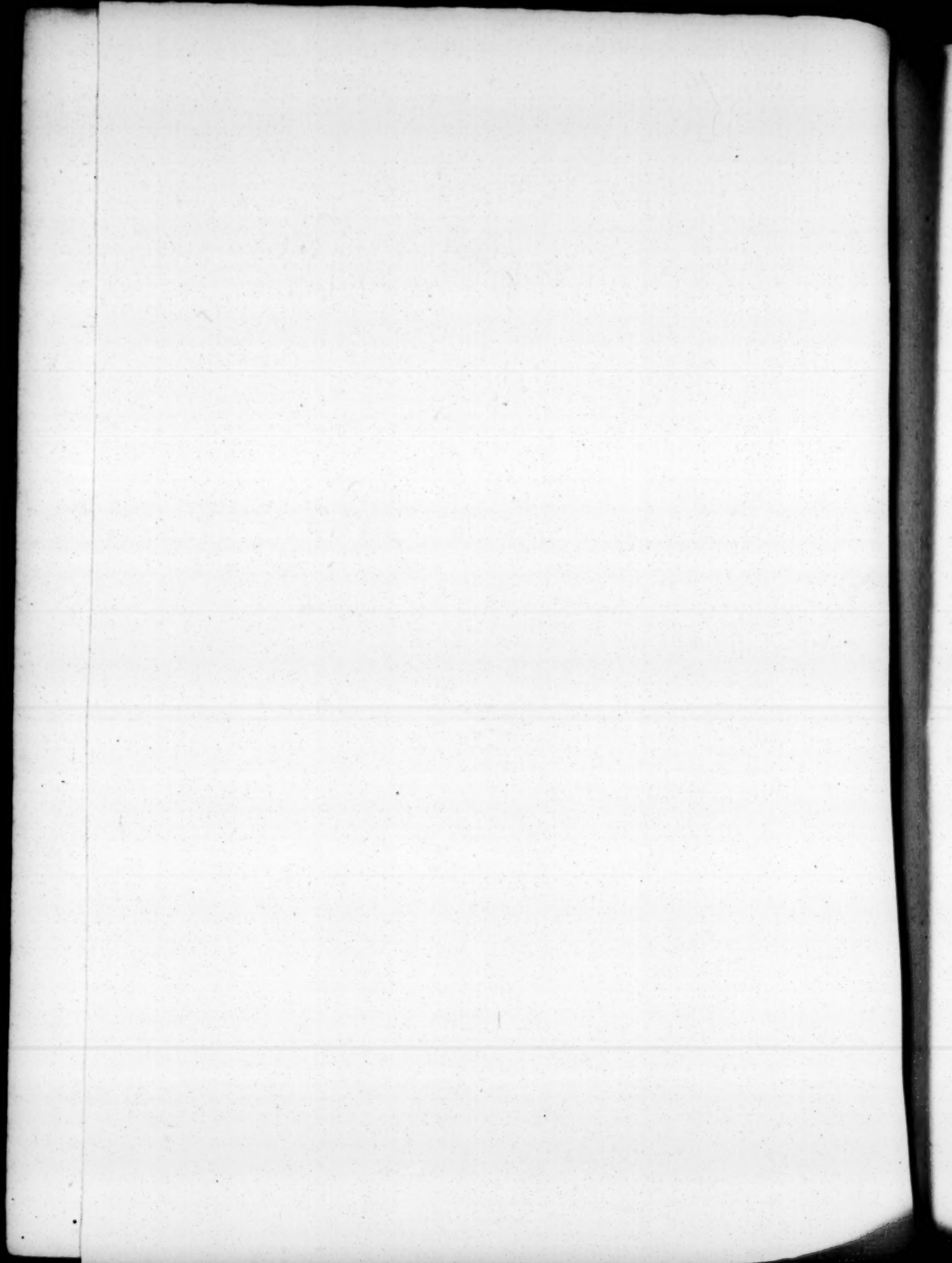
Thus we see the Whole of our Duty sum'd up in this one word *Love*, the best and noblest of all the Passions ; and how truly our Saviour stil'd it, *The fulfilling of the Law* : the Love of God containing and constraining us to all that we owe to him ; and the Love of our Neighbour including and drawing on all the parts of our Duty to him : Both which are imply'd in the

Last words of our Text, *On these two Commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets* : that is, these two Precepts are not only

agreeable to all the Doctrine deliver'd in the Law and the Prophets, but likewise comprize all the Duties requir'd by them. For all that the Law and the Prophets have said in the Old Testament, I may add also, all that the Gospel and the Apostles have said in the New, concerning believing in God, fearing, worshipping, trusting, honouring and obeying of him; and if there be any other, 'tis all comprehended in this Saying, *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy Heart, and with all thy Soul, and with all thy Strength.* And all that they have said concerning Justice, Honesty, and Charity to our Neighbour, and this, *Thou shalt not commit Adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false Witness, Thou shalt not covet;* and if there be any other Commandment, 'tis briefly comprehended in this Saying, namely, *Thou shalt love thy Neighbour as thy self,* Rom. 13. 9.

And now since the whole Duty of Man is compriz'd in the Love of God and our Neighbour, what remains but that we labor to fix in our Hearts the Love of both; first, loving God for himself, and then our Brethren for his sake; giving him what he often calls for, our whole Heart, Soul and Mind, not alienating any part of them from him, to whom of right they belong, nor dividing them between God and Mammon, which tends to a total withdrawing them from him. In a word, Let us enkindle in our Breasts here these Sparks of Love to God and our Neighbour, that they may improve into a Celestial Fire, and lead us at last to live for ever in the unquenchable Flames of Divine Love: Which God grant, &c.





A
PRACTICAL EXPOSITION
OF THE
SECOND PART
OF THE
Church-Catechism:
CONTAINING
The *LORD'S PRAYER.*

Mat. 6. 9. *After this manner pray ye, Our Father which
art in Heaven, &c.*



Printed in the Year 1707.

PHYSICAL EXPOSITION

OF THE

SECOND PART

OF THE

CHINESE EXHIBITION

THE 1893 PHILADELPHIA

EXHIBITION

1893

Printed in the U.S.A.

The Preface.

AS God Almighty has the sole Right to rule and govern us, so has he the sole Power to protect and provide for us; for the one, he has given us his Laws to direct our Lives; for the other, he expects our Prayers to obtain his Blessing. For tho he be both able and willing to supply all our Wants, and has promis'd to grant all that is needful and convenient for us; yet he hath suspended all upon the Condition of asking, and hath declar'd that he will be sought unto for these things. And indeed this is not only an easy and reasonable Service, but a fit and proper means for that end; Prayer being an Acknowledgment of the Divine Power and Readiness to help us, and likewise a Testimony of our Duty and Dependence upon him.

But because of our selves we know not how or what to pray for as we ought, our Blessed Saviour, who was best able, hath given us an exact Model of Devotion, known by the Name of the Lord's Prayer, which the Reader will here find in some measure explain'd to him.

It was twice deliver'd by Christ himself; once of his own accord in his Sermon on the Mount, and after that at the request of the Disciples, who desiring him to teach them to pray, as John taught his Disciples, gave them this, not only as a Pattern, but a perfect Form of Prayer, which hath accordingly been so used in the Christian Church ever since. And this has set both the Lawfulness and the Expediency of Forms of Prayer above the reach of all just Doubt or Contradiction; for hereby our Saviour has taught us, to take to our selves words in our solemn Addresses unto God, and not to depend upon present Conceptions, nor leave so weighty a Duty to sudden Suggestions and Expressions. Yea, by dictating this Sacred Form, and directing his Disciples to use it, he has prefer'd premeditated and well digest'd Words before extemporary Effusions, and thereby advanc'd or-
derly

derly and well-compos'd Forms above the irregular Devotion of gifted Brethren.

Moreover, We may observe in this Prayer the Succinctness and Brevity here us'd and prescrib'd by our Saviour, whereby a greater than Solomon hath will'd, that our Words unto God should be few. To this end, he has order'd our Petitions to be put up in general terms, leaving the distinct Matter, Manner, and Measure of disposing them to the Wisdom and Goodness of God, who knoweth what things we have need of before we ask, and is ever ready to do more abundantly than we can either ask or think. By this he has taught us (as a great Divine hath observ'd) that piece of Good Manners, not to be tediously punctual and particular in our Prayers, as if God needed Information, or were apt to forget or neglect the Particulars of our Good without minding of him.

I shall add no more, but Advice to all good Christians to a due Esteem and daily Use of this excellent Form, always tacking this perfect Prayer to their imperfect Petitions, which will render them the more pleasing to God the Father, when they are offer'd up in the Name and Words of his Beloved Son, in whom alone he is well pleased.

Farewel.

The Lord's Prayer.

OUR Father which art in Heaven, Hallowed be thy Name. Thy Kingdom come. Thy Will be done in Earth as it is in Heaven. Give us this Day our daily Bread. And forgive us our Debts as we forgive our Debtors. And lead us not into Temptation, but deliver us from Evil: For thine is the Kingdom, and the Power, and the Glory, forever. Amen.

An

A Practical Exposition of the Second Part of the Church-Catechism.

DISCOURSE I.

2 Cor. 3. 5. *Not that we are sufficient of our selves to think any thing as of our selves, but our Sufficiency is of God.*

AFTER the Rehearsal of the Ten Commandments, together with a brief Account of our Duty to God and our Neighbour contain'd in them, the Catechist is directed in the next words thus to bespeak the Catechumen; *My good Child, know this, that thou art not able to do these things of thy self, nor to walk in the Commandments of God, or to serve him without his special Grace, which you must therefore learn to call for by diligent Prayer.*

In which words the Party catechiz'd is instructed in three great and important Lessons.

1. His utter Inability of himself to keep the Law of God: *Know this; that thou art not able to do these things of thy self.*

2. The Necessity of God's Grace to assist him in the performance of it, in those words, *Nor to walk in the Commandments of God, or serve him, without his special Grace.*

3. The proper way and means of obtaining this Divine Grace, *which you must learn always to call for by diligent Prayer.* All which being weighty and necessary Truths, must be particularly handled. And,

1. I must begin with the Acknowledgment of our utter Impotence and Inability of our selves to keep the Law of God: *Know this, &c.* Of this I shall treat from these words of the Apostle, *Not that we are sufficient of our selves to think any thing as of our selves:* Where the Apostle tells us, that we are so far from being

able of our selves to keep the Law of God, that we cannot so much as *think anything of our selves*. And certainly if we cannot think a good Thought, we must be more unable to do a good Action; and if we cannot by our own strength do one good Action, how much less can we keep the whole Law?

In treating therefore of these words, it will be necessary,

First, To convince Men of this their utter Impotence and Inability to keep the Commandments of God.

Secondly, To enquire whence this Inability proceeds: And,

Lastly, To consider what use we are to make of it.

For the *First*, To convince us of this Inability, we have not only the express Testimony of Holy Scripture, but likewise many Examples of the Failings and Infirmities of the best Men recorded in it; all which are back'd and confirm'd to us by our own sad and woful Experience. The Holy Scriptures in sundry places hold forth this great and sad Truth: Our Blessed Saviour told the Jews, that tho *Moses gave them the Law, yet none of them ever kept it*, John 7. 19. Solomon declares that *the Righteous Man falleth seven times a day*, Prov. 24. 16. And elsewhere checks all vain Boasts and Pretences to Innocency, Prov. 20. 9. *Who can say, I have made my Heart clean, I am pure from my Sin?* St. James tells us, that *in many things we offend all*, Jam. 3. 2. And St. John, that *if we say we have no Sin, we deceive our selves, and the Truth is not in us*, 1 Joh. 1. 8. St. Paul assures us, that *the Law concludes all Men under Sin*; meaning, that none ever came up to the Exactness of its Precepts, but that *all have sinned and come short of the Glory of God*, Rom. 3. 23. All which, and many more places to this purpose, plainly prove our Impotence and Inability to keep the Law of God.

But beside these express Testimonies of Scripture, we have many Examples of human Frailty recorded in it, that may easily convince us of the Shortness and Imperfection of our Obedience. *David, a Man after God's own heart*, is recorded for the Breach of two great Commandments, by Adultery and Murder: both which we find him often confessing and bewailing before God, and thereby wash'd away the Guilt of them with the Tears of Repentance. *Solomon*, who is justly fam'd for the greatest and wisest of Men, was so far from keeping the Law of God, that he fell into Idolatry, which is in effect the breaking of all the Commandments. In the New Testament we find *St. Peter*, who was the first and chiefest of the Apostles, so far short of Perfection, that he fell
into

into great and grievous Enormities, denying his Master three times with bitter Oaths and Execrations; which likewise cost him many a tear, and made him weep bitterly, Mat. 26. 74, 75. St. Paul too, who was one of the greatest of Saints, acknowledges himself the greatest of Sinners, frequently confessing his Weakness, and saying, that of himself he could do nothing: *for in me (saith he) that is in my Flesh, dwells no good thing; and when I would do good, evil is present with me,* Rom. 7. 18. And if these great and eminent Saints were so sensible of their Inability to do the Will of God, how much more ought we to own and lament our greater Impotence?

But if we should think or judge otherwise of our selves, our daily Failings and Miscarriages would apparently confute us; for *in many things we offend all*, omitting what we ought to do, and doing what should be left undone: for which reason our Church hath taught us every day to confess, *That we have err'd and stray'd from God's ways like lost Sheep, following too much the Devices and Desires of our own Hearts*, continually offending against his holy Laws; from thence acknowledging that we have not Health or Strength enough in us to keep God's Commandments. But,

Secondly, Whence comes this Impotence or Inability to do the Will of God? Why this proceeds,

Partly, from the original Corruption and Depravedness of our Nature, contracted by the Fall of our first Parents. And,

Partly, likewise from the evil Suggestions and Temptations of our ghostly Enemies.

1. I say, this proceeds from the original Corruption of our Nature, contracted by the Fall of our first Parents: This is the prime fundamental Cause of all Sin and Wickedness, and particularly of that Averseness to Good, and Proneness to Evil, that is visible in all the Sons of Men. Indeed God made Man at first in his own Image, which consisted in Knowledge, Righteousness, and true Holiness; he endow'd him with Faculties suited to the Work for which he design'd him, making him in some measure Partaker of the Divine Nature, and in all things conformable to the Divine Will. In this state of Purity and Perfection, in which he came out of God's hand, he was able to keep the whole Law, and had strength enough to do all that was requir'd of him.

But tho God made Man upright (saith Solomon) yet he perverted his way, and found out many Inventions, Eccl. 7. 29. Our first

Parents, by disobeying their Maker, lost both their Strength and Innocence together, they craz'd all their Faculties, and deriv'd down Misery and Weakness to their Posterity ever since: *How weak is thine Heart* (saith God) *seeing thou hast done these things?* Ezek. 16 30. The first Transgression hath brought a Weakness upon Mankind, and enfeebled all their Powers: The Understanding that was once fill'd with Light and Knowledg, is now overspread with Darknes and Ignorance; the Will that was upright and conformable to the Will of God, is become crooked and perverse, and bent only upon what is evil; the Affections that were all orderly and plac'd upon right Objects, are now misplac'd and disorder'd, being eagerly carry'd where they should not. In a word, the whole Man is corrupt, and the very Heart and Conscience defil'd: which hath brought an Impotence upon the Soul, and disabled it to every good Work. Hence it comes to pass, that we are not sufficient of our selves to think any thing that is good; the Imaginations of the Heart, in this degenerate state, being evil, only evil, and that continually. Which Corruption of Nature is the first and great Cause of this Inability.

2. This proceeds partly from the evil Suggestions and Temptations of our spiritual Enemies, who, working upon the Corruption of our Nature, encrease our Weakness, and render us both unwilling and unable to do the Will of God. These daily assault and sollicit us to Evil, plying us with their Temptations, whereby they impair our Strength and create this Impotence. Satan the great Enemy of Mankind is still importuning and labouring to circumvent us, he hath his Wiles, his Devices, and his fiery Darts to wound and weaken us: this subtle Serpent beguil'd our first Parents even in Paradise; and if he prevail'd so far upon them in their State of Innocence, how much greater advantage hath he now upon us in this State of Impotence?

The World too is very busy in laying Baits and Snares for us, that hath Smiles to allure, and Frowns to affright us from our Duty; both which must mightily encrease the difficulty of Obedience, and render us very feeble and unable to perform it. But beside these,

We have an Enemy in our own bosom; the Flesh is daily struggling and tempting us to evil: *In me, that is, in my Flesh* (saith the Apostle) *there dwelleth no good thing; for the Flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the Flesh; so that when I would do Good, Evil is still present with me,* Rom. 7. And if that great Apostle

Apostle struggled with those Difficulties, that made him cry out, *O wretched Man that I am, who shall deliver me from this Body of Sin!* How much more may we groan under the Sense of our greater Impotence? This may suffice to convince us of our own Insufficiency, and to learn us this Lesson of the Catechism, that we can do nothing of our selves, and much less walk in the ways of God's Commandments by our own natural Strength.

But are the Laws of God impossible to be kept? To what purpose then are all the Exhortations to keep the Commandments? Does not *Solomon* bid us to *fear God and keep his Commandments*? And does not a greater than *Solomon* make this the great Mark and Touchstone of all true Love to him? *If ye love me, keep my Commandments.* And have both these put us upon an impossible Task? Yea, to show this not to be impracticable, do we not read that *Zachary and Elizabeth walk'd in all the Commandments of the Lord blameless*? And how can this consist with that utter Inability which the Catechism here charges upon human Nature?

In answer to this I say, That tho we cannot keep the Commandments in a strict legal Sense, or come up to that perfect and exact Obedience they require from us; yet we may and ought to keep them in that qualify'd evangelical Sense, which Christ in his Gospel hath promis'd to accept: For since the Fall of our first Parents, which brought this Impotence upon us, our gracious God hath been pleas'd to enter into a new Covenant with us, wherein he allows for our Infirmities, and will not be extreme to mark all that we do amiss: he will accept of our hearty Desires and Endeavours to please him, tho they fall short of Perfection, and will take Sincerity for compleat Obedience. In this new Covenant he not only allows for, but helps our Infirmities, and offers us those Aids and Assistances of his Holy Spirit, that may enable us to do what our natural Powers cannot perform. In this qualify'd Sense we are to understand all the Precepts that require us to walk in the Commandments of God; which tho we cannot do of our selves, yet if we have a willing Mind, and do our utmost, we shall not want that Assistance of Divine Grace, that shall supply all the Defects of our sincere Obedience, as will be more fully shew'd hereafter. In the mean time this Discourse may serve,

1. To check all Pride and Presumption in our selves, and teach us not to trust to our own Strength, which we see is no better than Weakness. He that presumes of his own Power, and depends

pends upon his own Strength, doth but lean upon a broken Reed; which will certainly deceive and disappoint him; for of ourselves we can do nothing. Of this the many Instances of human Frailty, as well as our own sad Experience, may abundantly convince. We find *David* in a high fit of Presumption comparing his Strength to a Mountain, and thinking himself as unmovable as that; *I said in my Prosperity* (saith he) *I should never be mov'd, thou, Lord, hast made my Mountain so strong.* God did but withdraw a little and leave him to himself, and he presently saw his Error, and by his many Failings soon found his own Weakness; *Thou hidest thy Face* (saith he) *and I was troubled,* Psal. 30. 6, 7. *St. Peter* was so confident of his Strength and firm Adherence to our Saviour, that he told him, tho all the World should forsake or deny, yet he would never deny him. Our Saviour did but turn aside and leave him to the trial of his Constancy, and he soon shamefully deny'd him; which made him sensible of his Folly, and lament it bitterly with tears of Repentance: for which reason the Apostle gives this strict Caution, *Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.* This may check all arrogant Conceit of our selves, and not only keep us from relying upon our own Strength, but make us walk humbly and warily under the sense of our own Weakness.

2. From this Discourse we learn the Vanity of expecting Justification by the Works of the Law: This was the Folly of the Jews, and especially of the Pharisees, who sought to establish their own Righteousness, and depended upon it for their Justification, affecting a generous kind of Happiness to be achiev'd by the Merit of their own Works, and scorning any such borrow'd and beggarly Felicity, that came like an Alms from the Bounty of Heaven. Against these we find *St. Paul* frequently arguing in many of his Epistles, telling them, that *by the Works of the Law can no Flesh living be justify'd, for by the Law is the Knowledge of Sin,* Rom. 3. 20. The manifold Defects and Imperfections of our Obedience, of which the Law it self may easily convince us, are sufficient to beat down the arrogant Opinion of Merit, to shew us our own Impotence, and to make us seek our Justification from some other. Moreover,

This Discourse may shew us the Error of the *Cathari* or Puritans of old, who pretended to Purity and Perfection here in this Life; and have herein been follow'd by some Sectaries of later days. But this pretence confutes it self, and utterly destroys that Purity and

and Perfection it pretends to; for our thinking or saying that we have no Sin, makes us the greater Sinners; we thereby (as St. John tells us) not only *deceive our selves, but make God a Lyar*: which shews not only the Falshood, but Blasphemy of such Pretences.

Lastly, This Discourse of our Inability to keep God's Commandments, shews us the great need we have of some higher Assistance to that end. And this leads me to the next Lesson of our Catechism; which is the Necessity of Divine Grace to enable us to do our Duty, and to obtain the Reward of it. But of this hereafter.

DISCOURSE II.

2 Cor. 3. 5. latter part, *Our Sufficiency is of God.*

I Shew'd in my last our utter Inability of our selves to keep the Commandments, from those words of the Catechism, *Know this, that thou art not able to do these things of thy self*: Which I confirm'd from those of the Apostle, *We are not sufficient of our selves to think any thing as of our selves*. And if not to think a good thing, then surely not to do the Will of God. I proceed now to the next Lesson there taught us, and that is, the Necessity of God's Grace to enable us to perform it, in those words, *Nor to walk in the Commandments of God, or serve him without his special Grace*: which implies, that tho we cannot do these things without the Divine Grace, yet with the Assistance of that we may be enabled to do them: of which I shall treat from these words, *Our Sufficiency is of God*. The foregoing words seem to deny us all kind of Sufficiency either of thinking or doing well; these seem to grant us some sort of both, by minding us of our Sufficiency; both which are easily reconcilable: we are *insufficient of our selves*, but *our Sufficiency is of God*. In speaking to this I must,

First, Endeavour to convince you of this Sufficiency, and shew what it is.

Secondly, Whence it comes, or where we have it. And,

Thirdly, What use we are to make of it. For the

First,

First, Both the Testimony of Scripture, of Reason, and Experience, may satisfy us of this Sufficiency. The Lord himself told St. Paul, that *his Grace was sufficient for him, that his Strength was made perfect in Weakness*, inasmuch that when he seem'd most weak, then was he strong, 2 Cor. 12. 9, 10. This made him tell the Corinthians, that *God was able so to make all Grace abound towards them, that they always, having all Sufficiency in all things, might abound to every good Work*, 2 Cor. 9. 8.

Indeed if we consider Mankind as they are in themselves, void of all Grace and Assistance, so they are like a Body without the Soul, lifeless and unactive, and unable to do any thing, as we before observ'd. In this condition the Apostle represents them as *dead in Trespasses and Sins*, Eph. 3. 1. meaning, that they can no more act or move in the ways of God than a dead man, who is void of all Sense and Motion: so our Saviour told his Disciples, *Without me ye can do nothing*, John 15. 5. And the great Apostle acknowledges so much, that *of himself he could do nothing*. But if we consider Mankind as supported by Divine Grace and Favour, so we find the case mightily alter'd with them; they who were *dead are alive again unto God*, and they who were *weak become strong*. Hence we find St. Paul, who before acknowledg'd he could do nothing, after declaring, that *he could do all things thro Christ that strengthen'd him*, Phil. 4. 13. And elsewhere, *tho he could do nothing against the Truth, yet he could do or suffer any thing for it*, 2 Cor. 13. 8. His Weakness was by this means turn'd into Strength, and he who was not sufficient to think or do a good thing, was able to perform the hardest task, and nothing was too difficult or impossible to him.

But as the Holy Scripture, so Reason too may satisfy us of this Sufficiency; without which we might utterly despair of doing our Duty, and be justly discourag'd from setting about it: for who will venture upon any thing, which he knows he has no Ability to perform? Will any attempt to fly in the Air without Wings, or work at a Trade without hands? No more would any attempt to do any good thing, if it were impossible to perform it. Yea, all the Calls and Exhortations in God's Word to keep his Commandments, to walk in his Laws, and observe his Statutes, do all suppose the Possibility of doing it; for God is no such hard Master, as to expect to *reap where he hath not sowed, or gather where he hath not strowed*. He rescu'd the Israelites out of the hands of Pharaoh, for laying impossible Tasks upon them, in ex-
acting

acting Brick without Straw ; and can we think he will require more of us than we have Power or Strength to perform ?

Beside, we have many Examples in Sacred Writ, of those that serv'd God acceptably, and walk'd before him to all well-pleasing. *Enoch* is said to have walk'd with God with a perfect Heart, and thereby *had that Testimony that he pleas'd God*, Heb. 11. 5. *David* was a *Man after God's own heart* ; and *Zachary and Elizabeth* are said to have walk'd in all the Commandments of the Lord blameless. To which we may add our own Experience, who find that we can and do many things, and might do much more, if we would exert the Power that God hath given us, and not turn the deaf ear to good Instructions.

All which may abundantly convince us, that we have some kind of Sufficiency or Ability to do what is requir'd of us.

But what is this Sufficiency, whereby we are enabled so to do ? Why, that is partly natural, and partly spiritual or supernatural.

Of the first sort are those natural Powers and Faculties, whereby we are enabled to know our Duty, and in some measure to observe and practise it. Thus we are endow'd with an Understanding to discern between Good and Evil, with a Will to chuse the one and refuse the other, and with Affections to move and act accordingly ; to which ruling Faculties all the inferior and sensitive Powers of Soul and Body are to be subject and subservient : these are implanted in our Nature, and interwoven in the very Frame and Make of our Being, which we are requir'd to exercise and exert according to the Rule of God's Commandments : And hereunto refer the Exhortations, *to work out our own Salvation, to make our Calling and Election sure*, and the like ; which call upon us to exercise and employ our natural Powers as far as they will go, to the promoting our own Salvation ; that is, to use our Reason and Understanding to knowing, our Will to chusing, our Affections to loving the best things, that may best secure and advance our own Happiness. But because these natural Faculties are unhappily deprav'd, and by the first Transgression have a wrong Bias clap'd upon them, that draws them from their right Objects, and inclines them too much to that which is evil ; therefore,

2. We are supply'd with some supernatural Aids and Assistances of the Holy Spirit to renew our Minds, and rectify those crooked and corrupt Inclinations. This spiritual or supernatural Aid is that which in Scripture is often stil'd Grace, and here in the Ca-

techism is call'd special Grace ; by which we are to understand, not the infusing of any new Habit in an instant, but the Holy Spirit's aiding and concurring with our natural Powers, and carrying them farther on in their Duty, than their own Strength would reach : for the Holy Ghost does not now overpower our Faculties in any irresistible way, but cooperates with them, helps their Weakness, and, where they fail or come short, supplies them with fresh Succour, to enable them to do what of themselves they cannot perform ; it shews them their way, when they are turning out of it either to the right hand or to the left, and helps them to go on when they are apt to fall or faint in it. This is the *Spirit's helping our Infirmities*, whereby he directs us in our way, and enables us to walk in it, by rectifying our Wills, and supplying the Defects of our Obedience : for which ends *his Grace is sufficient for us*, being ever ready to assist a willing Mind, and to accept according to what a Man hath, and not according to what he hath not. This is our Sufficiency here mention'd in the Text, or that special Grace mention'd in the Catechism, whereby we are in some measure enabled to walk in the Commandments of God, and to serve him.

But Secondly, Whence comes this Sufficiency, or where may we have it ? That the next words of the Text will inform us, *our Sufficiency is of God*. And this will be evident by considering,

1. That our very natural Powers are of God ; *He giveth us Life and Breath and all things*, and 'tis in him we live, move, and have our Being. 'Twas God that inspir'd our Souls with the Breath of Life, and endow'd them with all their Faculties : he form'd our Bodies, and gave them all their Powers ; so that all the Faculty we have of knowing the Will of God, or doing any thing towards it, is entirely his ; for which reason he is said to *work in us both to will and to do according to his good Pleasure* ; and elsewhere, to *work all our Works in us and for us*.

2. All our supernatural Aids and Assistances are also of God ; 'tis he that strengthens our Faith, raiseth our Hope, and increaseth our Charity ; these are the Works of his Holy Spirit acting within us, whereby he assists our Weakness, and helps us on farther in the paths of God's Commandments, than of our selves we are able to go. This is that Grace of God which is said to be sufficient for us, by which is meant some superadded Strength to our natural Powers, whereby they are rais'd and enabled to higher

†

Degrees

Degrees of Vertue and Obedience, than otherwise they could arrive to. In short then, all our Sufficiency, both natural and supernatural, is of God, and all the Powers of Nature and Grace are entirely owing to his Wisdom and Goodness.

This being a matter of great concernment to us to know, I shall endeavour to illustrate it to you by this Resemblance: An Artificer in making a Clock or Watch, furnisheth it within with Wheels and Spring, and all other things necessary to its orderly Motion; which being done, he sets it a going of it self, and leaves it to move by the Power and Influence of its own Spring; till by Time or Accident becoming out of order, he repairs the Decays of his own Work, and by his additional Art restores and continues it in its regular Motion. In like manner, the great Artificer of the World made Man upright, and endow'd him with those Faculties, that like so many Wheels and Springs enabled him to move on orderly in the ways of God, till by an unhappy Fall he crack'd and disorder'd his Faculties, and thereby contracted such an Impotence, as disabled him from moving and acting as he could before; whereupon his All-wise Maker graciously repairs the Decays of his Nature, and by the Supplies of his Grace enables him to move and act as he would have him.

By which we see, how *our Sufficiency is of God*, he having given us some natural Powers, which, tho left to our own liberty, yet he hath will'd and encourag'd us to use aright; and if we exert these as far as they will go in doing our Duty, we shall be farther assisted, and when they fail, shall receive that superadded Strength, which shall enable us to perform the Will of God in such a manner as will be accepted of him.

This Lesson the Catechism would have all Persons instructed in, not only for the clearing of their Knowledg in this great Truth, but for the good Use and Influence it may have upon their Lives and Conversations: which is the last thing propounded to be spoken to. And,

1. As the Sense of our own Weakness should keep us from all Presumption and trusting to our own Strength; so the Sense of this Sufficiency we have from God, may keep us from Despair, and check all Distrusts of his Grace and Goodness. Tho we are unable of our selves to do any thing that is good, yet his Grace we see is sufficient for us; and this is never wanting to our sincere Endeavours, God Almighty being more ready to give, than we are to ask it of him: This the eminent Servants of Christ

have ever acknowledg'd, and we our selves by trying the Experiment, would surely find ; which should teach us never to presume upon our own Strength, nor at any time to despair of the Divine Grace and Assistance.

2. This Discourse may serve to check the arrogant Conceit of Merit, and teach us to ascribe all that we are, have, or can do, to the Divine Bounty : For if all our Sufficiency be of God, then 'tis not of our selves, and consequently we can have nothing to boast of but our Infirmities, which rather need Pity than deserve a Reward. To merit any thing at God's hands, we must give something which is our own ; whereas we have nothing but what we receive from him, being beholden to him for our very Being, and daily depending upon his Bounty. Again,

To merit any thing, we must give something that we do not owe : for no Man merits for paying his Debts, but for doing some good Offices above and beside them ; whereas we owe our selves and all that we have to our Maker, and are indebted to him far more than we can discharge : insomuch that when we have done our best, *we are but unprofitable Servants, having done but our Duty,* and in many things falling short of that too. Beside,

To merit any thing, there must be a proportion between the Work and the Wages ; whereas nothing that we have or can do, bears any proportion to the promis'd Reward. In a word, having nothing of our own but Infirmities and Imperfections to pretend to, we can look for nothing but Pity or Punishment.

3. If all our Sufficiency be of God, then let us thankfully own and employ what we have in his Service. This is the way to procure a Blessing upon what we have already, and likewise to obtain more. He that us'd his Talents to his Master's Honour, was commended and rewarded with a larger share ; whereas he that neglected or misemploy'd them, forfeited all, and was with shame and infamy depriv'd of it. Which should teach us to beware of mispending our Time, Wealth, or Strength in the Service of Sin, of abusing the Gifts of God, or turning his Grace into Wantonness : But rather let us study to employ the Blessings of Heaven to the Glory of him that gives them ; so shall they be multiply'd upon us, and in the end promote our own Glory. Let us use that natural Power and Strength we have already in keeping of God's Commandments, and then we shall not fail of having more as our need shall require, nor miss at last of the Reward of so doing ; for *God will give Grace and Glory, and no*

good.

good thing will be withhold from them that lead a godly Life.

Lastly, If all our Sufficiency be of God, then may we learn hence where to find Grace and Strength to *help in time of need*; and likewise how we may obtain it. But this will lead me to the next thing in our Catechism, which is the way and means of obtaining Grace and Strength to keep God's Commandments, and that is by *calling for it by diligent Prayer*. Of which in the next.

DISCOURSE III.

Mat. 7. 7. *Ask, and it shall be given; Seek, and ye shall find; Knock, and it shall be open'd unto you.*

HAVING seen our natural Weakness and Inability of our selves to keep God's Commandments; together with the Fulness and Sufficiency of God's Grace to help and further us in the performance of them: I proceed now in the third place, to consider the way and means to which our Catechism here directs, for the obtaining of this spiritual Aid and Assistance for the keeping of them; and that is, *To call for it by diligent Prayer*. Of this I shall treat from these words of our Saviour, *Ask, and it shall be given*, &c. where both the Text and Catechism direct to the Duty of Prayer, as the most effectual means of obtaining *Grace to help in time of need*.

As for the Nature and Qualifications of Prayer, the Reader will find them explain'd in the eighteenth Discourse of the first Part of the Catechism, to which I refer him. As for the several parts of Prayer, we find them mention'd by the Apostle in 1 Tim. 2. 1, 2. where we have,

First of all, Supplications or Petitions for all manner of Good to Body and Soul.

2. Prayers or Deprecations for the averting of all manner of Evil to both.

3. Thanksgivings for all Mercies both publick and private.

4. Intercessions for all Men, for Kings, and all that are in Authority, and likewise for all others whom we are bound to pray for.

As for the times of Prayer, the Apostle tells us, that must be continually and without ceasing, 1 Thess. 5. 17. not that we are al-

ways

ways to be upon our Knees, or that we must never cease from the Act of Praying; for that would interfere with other Duties, and hinder us from the Business of our Callings, which we are likewise requir'd to mind and attend to: but that we be always in a due disposition and preparation for this Duty, that we frequently lift up our Hearts unto God, and mingle some pithy and pious Ejaculations with all the Affairs and Business of this Life: But chiefly, that we observe the stated Times and Seasons of Prayer, both in publick, private and secret; as on the Lord's Day, and other fasting and festival Days, appointed for solemn and publick Prayer; every day for private and family Prayer, in conformity to the daily Sacrifice appointed by God Almighty, for our daily Wants and Blessings; and at convenient Seasons to *enter our Closets, and shut the Doors, praying to our Father in secret, who hath promis'd to reward us openly*, Mat. 6. 6.

But that which we are here principally to consider, is the benefit and usefulness of Prayer, in order to the attaining of Divine Grace and Assistance, together with the Success and Efficacy of Prayer to those Ends; both which are here declar'd and promis'd by our Blessed Saviour: *Ask, and it shall be given; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be open'd unto you.* Where we have

The Duty of Prayer requir'd of us. And

The Promise of Audience and Acceptance to recommend it to us; both which are here variously expressed. As,

1. 'Tis express'd by *asking*, or *making our Requests known unto God*: In which we are consider'd as humble Supplicants at the Throne of Grace, suing for Mercy and Pardon for past Offences, and begging for Power and Strength against them for the future: which we are encourag'd to ask by a Promise of receiving; *Ask, and it shall be given*; and elsewhere, *Ask, that your Joy may be full*.

2. Prayer is here express'd by *seeking*, and so 'tis often stil'd in Scripture, a *seeking unto God*: By this we are represented as lost Creatures, that have forfeited the Favour of God, and lost all Power of serving and pleasing of him; and therefore are set upon seeking of God, upon searching and making after him: and the Promise annex't to this, is the assurance of finding him; *Seek, and ye shall find*; for he will be *found of them that seek him*, and will not hide himself from them that *search after him*.

3. Prayer is here exprest by *knocking*: by which we are represented as so many Beggars, knocking at the Gates of Heaven, waiting

waiting for a Blessing or Boon to help us. And to this we are encourag'd with a Promise of Admission, *Knock, and it shall be open'd unto you.* Hence Prayer is sometimes stil'd the Key that opens the Gates of Heaven; sometimes the Hand that reaches out Mercy, and by both an *Entrance is administred to us abundantly into the Kingdom of God.* Moreover,

Prayer is sometimes exprest by *calling upon God, and crying unto him*; both which have the Promise of being heard annext to them: *Call upon me (says God) in the time of trouble, and I will hear thee,* Psal. 50. 12. *David cried unto the Lord, and he heard him*; adding, *that God will hear the Cry of his People, and will save them.*

All which instruct us in the Nature and Efficacy of Prayer, and shew it to be the ordinary Way and Means appointed by God to obtain Grace and Mercy from him.

But how doth Prayer prevail with God; or by what influence doth it operate towards the attaining his Blessing?

To which I answer,

1. Negatively, It works not by way of Information; for God knows our Necessities before we ask, and needs not to be inform'd of any of our Wants or Desires. With Men indeed this is necessary, who must be acquainted with our Necessities before they can know or relieve them. Men are limited as to Place and Power, and cannot tell what others want or feel, and therefore must have their Condition represented and laid before them e'er they can help them. But with God 'tis otherwise, he is every where present, and so is thorowly acquainted with all the Necessities of his Creatures; he searches the Heart, and so knows their Thoughts and Desires long before hand; infomuch that as he needs no Information, so that can have no influence upon the Success of our Petitions. Nor,

2. Does Prayer operate or prevail with God by way of Persuasion: To persuade another, is to incline him to something to which he was before averse; and this is done by the Arts of Speech, which working upon the Passions, moves him to do that which otherwise he would not. He that does a thing without this, is said to act freely and of his own accord; but he that does it by Intreaty, or working upon the Affections, is said to be persuaded. This is the usual way of dealing with Men, who by the use of words, many or few, are often drawn to do something, which before they had no mind to. But God is not to be wrought upon this way, he is not to be mov'd by the Arts of Speech, nor prevail'd

prevail'd upon by the dextrous insinuation and fluency of a voluble Tongue; he is void of all Passions, and so not to be persuaded by stirring of them; and being himself the first Mover, cannot be mov'd by any thing without him. To be wrought upon this way, argues Weakness and Imperfection, which must be remov'd from the Divine Nature. He that is persuaded to a thing, is so, because he sees farther into it after than he did before; whereas God sees all things presently and perfectly, and is not assisted by any Advice or Information. Beside, to be mov'd this way, argues mutability and inconstancy: for he that is persuaded to a thing, changes his Mind and turns to what he was before averse to; whereas God is unchangeable both in his Nature and Will, and *with him is no variableness, neither shadow of turning*. So that Prayer cannot operate with God by any Arts of Persuasion. Nor yet,

3. Does it prevail by Importunity, or wearying him into the grant of our Suit. The unjust Judg indeed was prevail'd upon to do a Widow right by the restless importunity of her Suit, *Because she troubles me* (says he) *I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me*, Luk. 18. 4, 5. Thus many importunate Beggars are succour'd, not so much for their Wants, or their Worth, as merely to be rid of them, Men being tir'd with the vehemence and importunity of their Request, and so relieving them only to relieve themselves. But God is not thus to be wearied by our Importunity; being above and without all Passions, he cannot be disturb'd by the loudness or vehemence of any Address: Nothing can discompose the perfect calmness and serenity of his Mind, nor can the most restless and repeated Importunity weary him into a Concession of what we ask. And if the success of our Petitions be at any time ascrib'd in Scripture to the fervency or frequency of them, it must be understood as spoken after the manner of Men, and lets us know the Effect and Issue of such Prayers; which tho they cannot excite any Passion or Perturbation in God, who is perfectly free from them, yet will they find the same Effect as if he felt these things, and he will stand affected towards us, as we are wont to be when acted by them. By which it appears, that our Prayers prevail not with God, either by Information, Persuasion, or Importunity; which things, tho of great use and necessity in our Applications to Men, have yet no force or efficacy at all in our Addresses to God.

But how then doth Prayer work upon God, and prevail with him for the procuring of Grace and Mercy from him?

Why, this proceeds not from any Worth in the Persons that offer it, nor yet from any Virtue in the Prayer it self that is offer'd up; but merely as 'tis the Condition upon which God hath promis'd and oblig'd himself, to grant the Grace we stand in need of: So that if we fulfil the Condition upon which he hath suspended all his Blessings, and call upon him in the way which himself hath appointed for the supply of all our Wants, he is in a manner bound by his own Word to give the good Things we ask of him. *If we confess our Sins* (says the Apostle) *he is just and righteous to forgive them*: and having freely promis'd, *That if we ask, we shall receive; if we seek, we shall find; if we knock, it shall be open'd to us*; his own Truth and Faithfulness stand engag'd to make it good, and to do all that for us which we cannot do for our selves. In short then, Prayer prevails not by its own Worth, but by the sole Virtue of the Divine Promise; and 'tis not any Act or Merit of ours, but God's Free-Grace and Goodness that gives it all its Efficacy.

But why is Prayer above all other Dutys singled out as the Condition upon which God is pleas'd to promise and bestow all his Blessings? In answer to this,

Tho (as a Learned Divine has observ'd) God's Sovereign Will and Pleasure be a sufficient Reply to this and such-like Inquiries; yet there is something in Prayer that makes it more especially fitted to this End than any other Duty: and that because 'tis the most signal and peculiar Act of Dependance that we can express to our Maker, and therefore must best qualify us for his Favour; for to pray to another, does naturally imply these two things.

1. That the Person praying stands in need of something which he cannot do for himself.

2. That the Person prayed to, is both able and willing to do it for him; and in these two consist that which we properly call our Dependance upon God: for he that is truly sensible of his own Weakness and Inability to help himself, and is withal fully persuaded of the Infinite Power and Readiness of him he prays to to supply his Wants; and upon this Persuasion addresses to him in the way that himself hath prescrib'd to that purpose, plainly expresses his Duty and Dependance upon him. And indeed, were it left to our selves to prescribe the Conditions of the Divine Favour and Bounty, we could not conceive a more easy and proper

Means to derive his Blessing upon us, than such a temper of Mind as makes us to own our own Insufficiency, and to rely intirely upon the Goodness and Sufficiency of our Maker.

But how must our Prayers be qualify'd, that they may obtain the desir'd Effect, and prevail for Grace to help in time of need? This must be known and observ'd too: for tho our Saviour here puts us upon *asking, seeking and knocking*, with a promise of Success in them all; yet the Apostle tells of some that *ask, and receive not, because they ask amiss*; and we read of others that *seek, and find not, because they seek not aright*; and likewise of a third sort, who *knock* without being open'd to, but instead of that are excluded for *workers of Iniquity*.

What then is that *diligent Prayer* prescrib'd in our Catechism for the obtaining this Divine Grace? Why, by that we are to understand,

1. Sincere and hearty Prayer, in opposition to all hypocritical and lip-Devotion: God Almighty *requires Truth in the inward Parts*; he accepts and answers the pious Breathings of a devout Heart, and rewards them too with the desir'd Blessing; but he hates the vain affected Harangues of the Hypocrite, and instead of a Blessing, answers them only with Repulse and a Curse. And therefore we find him sharply rebuking those that *drew nigh him with their Lips, when their Hearts were far from him*; willing them to come with a faithful and true Heart, if they hope to find Mercy from him.

2. Diligent Prayer must be frequent or constant; not giving it over thro weariness and wantonness, but *continuing instant in Prayer with all perseverance*, being always in a readiness for this Duty, and observing the stated and solemn Times of Devotion, This is to pray continually, when we daily renew our Petitions, and cease not in all our Affairs to ask his Blessing.

3. Diligent Prayer is fervent and affectionate, in opposition to coldness and lukewarmness; 'tis *the effectual fervent Prayer of the Righteous Man that availeth much*: They are strong Crys and Tears that pierce the Heavens, and enter the Ears of God; whereas he turns the deaf Ear to cold and heartless Petitions, and instead of blessing, spues the lukewarm Person out of his Mouth.

4. That our Prayers may be successful, they must be offer'd up in Faith, and with full assurance of being heard. So St. James tells us, if we would ask so as to receive, we *must ask in Faith, without wavering*;

wavering; for he that wavers is like a Wave of the Sea driven of the Wind and tossed: and let not such think to obtain any thing at the hands of God. For all doubting supposes a distrust either of his Power or Will to help us; both which make him a Liar, and where they are harbour'd, must needs mar the success of our Petitions; for which reason we are bid to lift up clean hands without wrath or doubting.

5. A successful Prayer must be tender'd with Humility, for *God resisteth the Proud, and gives his Grace only to the Humble.* He hath regard to the humble and contrite Heart, that is sensible of its own Wants and Weakness, but beholds the Proud afar off, who vainly thinks he needs no Assistance. This is evident in the poor Publican, whose plain *Lord have Mercy upon me a Sinner*, prevail'd more for his Justification, than all the vain-glorious Vaunts of the proud Pharisee.

Lastly, Diligent Prayer is attended with the use of all good Means appointed for our own Succour; for 'tis in vain to cry, God help, without putting to our own Strength, or applying our selves to those Instruments that are ordain'd of God to that End, as has been shew'd elsewhere, *Part 1.*

From this Discourse we may learn,

1. Our own Vileness and Unworthiness, who can neither do or deserve any thing of our selves towards our own Salvation; *By Grace are ye saved* (says the Apostle) *for 'tis the Gift of God.*

2. We learn hence the great Goodness of God in dispensing his Blessings upon such easy Terms; 'tis, we see, but ask and have; *Seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be open'd to you.* And upon what milder Terms could we expect such inestimable Favours? *Open thy Mouth wide* (says God) *in Prayer, and I will fill it.* And certainly, they deserve to go without the Favours of Heaven, who think them not worth the asking.

To conclude then, Let us learn always to call for them by diligent Prayer, which we are to put up in the Name of Christ, and for such things only as are agreeable to his Will.

DISCOURSE IV.

Luke 11. 2. *And he said unto them, When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in Heaven, &c.*

WE have seen the Efficacy of Prayer towards the supply of all our Wants, how it operates with God for the obtaining of Mercy, and how it must be qualify'd to render it effectual to that End. It remains then,

That I proceed to the Lord's Prayer, which the Catechism in the next words calls upon the Catechumen to rehearse, in these words; *Let me hear you say the Lord's Prayer.* To which

The answer is, *Our Father which art in Heaven, &c.*

But before I enter upon the Explication of this Divine Form, 'twill be requisite to premise a few things for the better clearing our way to it: And here the

First and great Thing to be observ'd, is the Author of this Prayer, which is no other than *the Son of God*; yea, one that is himself *God blessed for ever*, call'd therefore *the Lord's Prayer*. This Son of God lay in the *Bosom of his Father*; and being thereby thorowly acquainted with his Mind and Will, could best tell what was fittest for us to ask, and for him to give.

Moreover, this Son of God became the Son of Man too, that he might the better succour and instruct us: he took upon him our Infirmities, and *was in all Points tempted like as we are*; that he might become a *merciful High-Priest*, willing to pity and to pray for us. Whilst he was in the Flesh, he was very conversant in this Duty, spending whole Nights in Prayer, which *he offer'd up with strong Cries and Tears, and was heard in that he feared*, Heb. 5. 7. He that was thus able to pray himself, was best able to teach us to pray; and being our Advocate and Mediator, was as willing as able to teach us, and likewise to procure Acceptance to the Prayer that he taught. In the Verse before the Text, we find him busied in this very Work, for he had just made an end of praying, when one of his Disciples desir'd him to teach them to pray; to whom he then gave this Form, *When ye pray, say, Our Father, &c.* Having found the Author, we are,

2. To consider the Matter of this Prayer, which must be the most excellent, the most useful, and the most agreeable to the Divine Will, being indited to Him who is the Wisdom of the Father, and dictated by that holy Spirit which cannot err. As for our selves, the Apostle tells us, that *we know not what to pray for as we ought*. We are apt many times to desire things that are more hurtful than beneficial for us, things that tend more to feed our Vanity and inflame our Lusts, than to save our Souls; and the Mercy is oftentimes greater in denying than granting them to us. To prevent this, our Saviour hath here sum'd up the matter of our Prayers for us, and directed us only to ask such things as tend to the Glory of God, and the Salvation of our Souls. Here is nothing mean or trivial, nothing unnecessary or unbecoming is made the matter of our Request; but all things are so wisely order'd and contriv'd in it, as may best sute the Dignity of the Divine Majesty, and the Necessitys of those that address to him: So that as *Solomon's Song* is call'd the *Song of Songs*, or the most excellent of all Songs, for the Wisdom of the Composer, and the Weight of the Matter contain'd in it; so this may be stil'd the Prayer of Prayers, for the Wisdom of the Author, and the Worth of the things desir'd in it. This for the Matter of this Prayer. Then,

3. For the Form, 'tis the most absolute, perfect and comprehensive of all Forms; in which as there is nothing redundant that may be well spar'd, so there is nothing defective that needs to be supply'd: All that is necessary to be done or desir'd, for advancing the Honour of our Maker, is briefly compriz'd in the three first Petitions, wherein we are taught to pray for the enlarging the Kingdom, the hallowing the Name, and the fulfilling the Will of our Heavenly Father. All that is needful for the Supply of our own Wants, both of Body and Soul, is sum'd up in the three last Petitions; wherein we are directed to pray for our *daily Bread*, for our bodily Sustenance, for *Forgiveness of Sins*, for the Health and Welfare of our Souls, and for *Deliverance from all Evil* of Sin and Punishment, for the eternal Happiness and Salvation of both. In a word, all that is requisite to be requested for the Life that now is, and that which is to come, is summarily contain'd in this compleat and comprehensive Form. Then,

4. For the Parts of this Prayer, they are reduc'd to these three:

(1.) The

(1.) The Preface, contain'd in these words, *Our Father which art in Heaven.*

(2.) The Petitions, in number six, in the following words, *Hallow'd be thy Name, thy Kingdom come,* and so forth.

(3.) The Conclusion or Doxology, in these words, *For thine is the Kingdom, the Power, and the Glory, for ever and ever, Amen.*

In which the three great parts of Prayer, Supplication, Deprecation and Thanksgiving manifestly meet, as will appear hereafter in the Explication of them. Moreover,

5. We may observe in these words a strict charge to use this Form in our Addresses unto God; for our Saviour bids us, when we pray, to say, *Our Father*, &c. which is a plain Command to go to him with these words. This is the rather to be minded, because some have lately started a new and wild Notion, that our Saviour prescrib'd this Prayer only as a Pattern or Platform to frame other Prayers by, and not as a Form to be us'd in the same words; which has made many omit it both in their publick and private Devotions.

But this is directly contrary, not only to the express words of the Text, which wills us, whenever we pray, to say, *Our Father*, &c. but likewise to the Sense put upon them in all Ages of the Church, which hath ever address'd to God in these words, and never left out this divine Form in any of the publick Offices of Devotion.

Lastly, We may observe from these words, both the Lawfulness and Usefulness of Forms of Prayer in the Worship of God. We find Forms of Blessing and Prayer prescrib'd by God Almighty in the Old Testament; in conformity to which, the Jewish Doctors gave Forms of Prayer to their Disciples, to be learnt and us'd by them. In the New Testament we find *John* the Baptist, the first Gospel-Preacher, did the same; and here we find the Disciples desiring our Saviour to teach them to pray, as *John* taught his Disciples; and he instantly gave them this divine Form, with a Command to use it in all their solemn Addresses unto God, as the distinguishing Badg and Cognizance of his Disciples. So that they who lay aside this Prayer, do in effect renounce their Discipleship; and instead of being the true Followers of Christ, prove only so many Deserters of him. In short,

The Precept and Practice of our blessed Saviour, who both prescrib'd and us'd Forms of Prayer; the Example of the Primitive Christians, and all that succeeded them, who have done
the

the same ever since, may abundantly confirm us in the lawfulness and use of this, and other Forms of Prayer compos'd by it: yea, the many Indecencys that are found in the Devotions of those that practise otherwise, may plainly convince us not only of the Expediency but Necessity of godly Forms, to preserve the Harmony and Reverence of Divine Worship.

And now having premis'd these things, I come to the Lord's Prayer it self, where I must begin,

1. With the Preface to it, contain'd in these words, *Our Father which art in Heaven.* In which words we are directed to address unto God: (1.) With the endearing Title of *Father.* (2.) With the common Title of *Our Father.* (3.) With the high and noble Title of *Heavenly Father,* or *Father which is in Heaven.* All which tending to the Efficacy and Solemnity of our Devotion, must be briefly consider'd. And,

1. We are here directed to begin our Prayers with the endearing Compellation of *Father,* which we know is the first and chiefest of all Relations, saying, *Our Father.*

To this the Son of God directs us, partly to assure us of God's fatherly Care and Affection towards us, and partly to mind us of our filial Love and Duty towards him; and with what fitter Title could we begin our Devotions than that of *Father,* which includes both? For,

1. The Love of a Parent towards a Child is very dear and tender: Can a Father forget his Son, or a Mother forsake the Offspring of her own Bowels? no more can God leave or forsake his own Children. Why, he made and gave us our Being, and so is our Father by Creation; and when we, like prodigal and rebellious Sons, had forfeited his Favour, and lost our Sonship, he restor'd it again to us, engrafting us a-new into his Family, and by a fresh Title of Adoption, enabling us to cry, *Abba, Father.* He hath begotten us again to a lively hope, and so is our Father by Regeneration; he gives us Food and Raiment, he preserves, instructs, corrects, and does all other good Offices of a Father for us here; and above all, expresses his fatherly care by providing an eternal Inheritance for us hereafter. And as this Appellation assures of this his fatherly Love and Care towards us; so does it mind us also of our filial Love and Duty towards him, engaging us to draw nigh to him in Faith and Hope, to put our Trust in him, to be thankful for all his Mercies, to submit to his Corrections, and to serve him truly all the days of our Life.

Alb

All this is included in the Title of Father, with which we are here taught to usher in our Requests ; from whence we may learn to come with boldness to the Throne of Grace, knowing that we cannot miss of the Bowels of a Father, if we bring with us the Affections of Children.

2. We are here directed to begin our Prayers, not only with the endearing Appellation of Father, but with the common Title of *Our Father* : By which our Saviour hath taught us not to confine our Prayers to our selves only, but to take in all Mankind within the Compass of our Devotion and Charity. He doth not will us to say, *My Father*, or to call upon him singly for our selves, but to address to him in a common stile, and to say, *Our Father*, to link us together in our Devotion, and make us Partakers of each other's Prayers. The term of *Father* minds us of our relation to God, the term of *Our Father* minds us of our relation to one another ; the former serves to increase our Faith, the latter our Charity : and both mind us that we are Brethren, partaking of the same Nature, and belonging to the same Family, and therefore are concern'd to desire the good of others equally with our own.

By this our Saviour hath taught us to account and call upon God, as the common Father of Mankind, who is much more ready than any earthly Parent to hear the Cries, and to give good things to his Children. And this makes it indeed a common Prayer, in the behalf of our selves and all Men ; yea, by willing us to address to God in this general Compellation, he hath united us all into one Soul, and taught us with one Heart and one Voice to breathe out our Requests together : by which he hath directed us to lay aside all Malice and Envy, to love as Brethren, and to come together as so many Children of the same Father ; and then we shall say with the Psalmist, *Behold, how good and pleasant a thing it is for Brethren to dwell together in Unity!* In short,

There is no Father but is delighted with the Concord and Unity of his Children, nor can any turn the deaf Ear to their united Petitions ; but this is no where more acceptable and successful than in our Addresses unto God, whose holy Spirit is no less griev'd at our Divisions, than 'tis delighted with Unanimity ; which should teach us to labour for those pious and charitable Dispositions, that may incline us to unite in our Petitions, and with one Mind and one Mouth to say, *Our Father*.

3. To the common Relation and Compellation of *Our Father*, we are directed to add the Title of *Heavenly Father*, or *Our Father which art in Heaven*; partly to distinguish him from all earthly Parents, and partly to raise our Minds above these terrene Objects here below, and fasten them on the celestial Mansions above. Our Fathers upon Earth are impotent and weak, like our selves; and tho they may wish well to their Children, yet are many times unable to help them: but our Father in Heaven is always willing, and always able to help those that call upon him. This is signify'd to us by the Royal Seat of his Residence, which is in Heaven, the Center of all Happiness and Power, where he *reigns as a King for ever*, and has his Imperial Throne in the Regions of Light and Glory; whereby is represented to us the superlative Greatness and Majesty of him whom we address to in our Prayers; which is not any frail earthly Creature, like our selves, but the omnipotent Creator of all things, whose Throne is in Heaven, and can do whatever pleases him. He is indeed every where, and filleth the Earth as well as Heaven with his Presence; but his Royal Seat, or more especial Residence, is in Heaven, the Mansion of never-failing Light and Glory, from whence he beholds and blesses the Children of Men.

By this our blessed Saviour would,

1. Possess our Minds with awful Apprehensions of God, and create Reverence and Humility in our Approaches to him, considering the infinite distance and disproportion between him and us; he being the great God that hath his Throne in the Heavens, and we but vile Worms, crawling upon the face of the Earth. Now this Reverence is order'd to be express'd by the Paucity of our Words, and the Lowliness of our Gestures in our Addresses to him. For the former, *Solomon* wills us to consider, *that God is in Heaven, and we upon Earth, therefore our Words should be few*: Sutable whereunto a greater than *Solomon* hath condemn'd the much Speaking of the Heathens, and the long Prayers of the *Pharisees*. For the latter, *David* calls upon us to *worship, and fall down, and kneel before the Lord our Maker*: which requires us to pray to him with the greatest lowliness both of Body and Mind; and to encourage us hereunto, our blessed Saviour hath given us his Precept and Example for both.

2. Our praying to a Father in Heaven was design'd to confirm our Faith and Hope in him, and to beget the greater assurance of an Answer to our Petitions, for Power and Goodness are inse-

A a a a

parably

parably annex'd to his Royal Throne: Being seated in the highest Heavens, he hath all other things under his Feet, the very Angels themselves continually attending his Throne, and being ever ready to do his Will. And what can we want on Earth, that have a Father in Heaven that can do all things?

3. The consideration that God is in Heaven serves to elevate our Minds above these earthly things, and to fix them upon the things above. *Sursum Corda*, lift up your Hearts, was often sounded in the Ears of the People in the times of the Primitive Devotion; to which the Answer was, *Habemus ad Dominum*, we lift them up unto the Lord. Low and mean Thoughts and Desires become not those that pray to the most High, his being in Heaven should heighten our Minds, and raise them above the perishing Vanities of this World.

In a word, the relation of *Father* may give us Boldness and Confidence in our addressing to him.

His being *Our Father* may teach us Charity and Concord in all our Requests: His being *Our Father in Heaven* may teach us Reverence and godly Fear in all our Approaches to the Throne of Grace. So much for the Preface to this excellent Prayer, in which we see every Word hath its weight, and admirably prepares us to put up the following Petitions.

DISCOURSE V.

Luke 11. 2. *Hallow'd be thy Name.*

HAVING done with the Preface, I come to the Petitions of the Lord's Prayer, which are in number Six; three whereof relate unto God, as *Hallow'd be thy Name, Thy Kingdom come, Thy Will be done on Earth as it is in Heaven*; and three unto our selves, as *Give us this day our daily Bread, Forgive us our Sins, and Lead us not into Temptation*. The former tend to the advancing of God's Glory, and the latter to the promoting our own Salvation.

But before I begin to speak particularly of them, it will not be amiss to observe two things; the one relating to the Order, the other to the Number of these Petitions.

1. That which concerns the Order, is that our Saviour here directs us in the first place to mind the Honour of our Maker, and to prefer his Glory before our own Salvation; for the Petitions that refer to the former, go before those that concern the latter. Indeed the Glory of God was the first and great end of our Creation; he made and design'd all things subservient thereunto, and stamp'd apparent Marks of his infinite Power, Wisdom and Goodness upon them for that purpose: But Man especially was endow'd with nobler Facultys to that end, having an Understanding to know, and a Tongue to set forth his Praise. This is to be the end of all our natural Actions; *Whether ye eat or drink (saith St. Paul) do all to the Praise and Glory of God,* 1 Cor. 10. 31. but must be chiefly so of all our religious Actions, which the same Apostle stiles *the Fruits of Righteousness, to the Glory and Praise of God,* Phil. 1. 11. And St. Peter declares, the end of all our good Works is, *that God in all things may be glorify'd,* 1 Pet. 4. 11. 'Twas the Pharisees fault to make their Prayers for selfish and secular ends, to be seen of Men, and to court more the Praise of Men than the Honour of God; whereas our Saviour, in this Prayer, hath taught us another Lesson, where, by placing the Petitions that concern our Maker before those that relate to our selves, he hath shew'd that our first and principal Regard ought to be to him, and that we are to prefer his Glory before our own Good: which is therefore to be observ'd not only in all our Prayers, but in the whole course of our Lives. This for the Order. Then,

2. For the Number: We are allow'd to put up as many Petitions for our selves, as are requir'd for our Maker; for our Saviour hath here prescrib'd three for each. And tho Duty and Decency require our first and principal regard for the Glory of God, yet in subordination to that, we may and ought to consult our own Good: yea, God Almighty hath so closely twisted his own Glory and our Good together, that we cannot mind the one without the other; there is such an inseparable Connexion between them, that our Happiness consists in honouring of him: for we cannot better serve our selves than by serving him, and we never advance his Glory but we promote our own. So that we cannot complain of God as a hard Master, who hath thus made our Duty to become our Interest, and for one Petition put up for him, hath allow'd us to put up another for our selves. Sure his Commandments cannot be grievous, that are allay'd with so

much Sweetness, and carry their Reward with them; nor can his ways be unequal, who hath equally minded our Happiness with his own Glory.

That which we are to observe from hence, is the exceeding great Honour and Favour which God vouchsafes to his worthless Creatures, in bearing so tender a regard towards them, in a manner loving them as himself, and equally consulting their Honour and Happiness with his own Glory; which should make us say with the Psalmist, *Lord, what is Man, that thou art thus mindful of him; or the Son of Man, that thou so regardest him?*

And now having premis'd these things, I begin with the first Petition of the Lord's Prayer, contain'd in these words, *Hallow'd be thy Name.* What is meant by the *Name of God*, and what by *Hallowing* or *Sanctifying his Name*, has been already open'd in our Exposition of the Third Commandment; to which, to avoid Repetitions, I refer the Reader.

Briefly, By the *Name of God*, we are to understand all that by which he makes himself known to us, and distinguisheth himself from all others, as his Titles, his Attributes, his Word, and his Works; and likewise all things related to him, or denominated by him, as his Ministers, his Sanctuary, his Sabbath, his Possessions, or that consecrated part of our Substance which he hath reserv'd and devoted to the Altar: all which being intitul'd to him, and stil'd more peculiarly his, are here comprehended under the *Name of God*.

By *Hallowing* or *Sanctifying* of this Name, we are to understand the having an honourable Esteem of it, the exalting of it in our Mind, and separating it from common and profane to divine and sacred Uses.

But for the fuller understanding of this Petition, we may note, that to sanctify in Scripture hath a double sense, either to make holy, or to use and do unto a thing according to, or as becometh its Holiness. In the former of these Senses God is not to be hallow'd or sanctify'd by us; for he being infinitely holy of himself, we can neither add to his Holiness, nor take from it: and therefore 'tis in the latter sense that we are to understand these words, when we say, *Hallow'd be thy Name*; that is, that we think and speak of it in a holy manner, and use it in such a way as becometh the Holiness of it. And how that may be best done, 'twill be requisite here briefly to declare.

To which end we are to observe a twofold Holiness: The one original, absolute and independent, which appertains to God only; the other a deriv'd, relative Holiness, which appertains to those things that are more peculiarly his, and belong to him.

Now according to these two sorts of Holiness, there are two different ways of Sanctification; the one appertaining to God himself, the other to all things related to him, and call'd by his Name. For the

First, There is a peculiar incommunicable Honour and Holiness to be attributed to God, upon the account of his supereminent Excellency and Perfections, which is not to be given to any created Being; and this is that religious or divine Worship which is in Scripture appropriated to him, *Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve*, Mat. 4. This is that *Glory to God in the Highest*, which was sung by the Angels at our Saviour's Birth, and which they are still singing in Heaven, *To him that sitteth on the Throne, and to the Lamb for evermore*. This is the Honour due to his infinite and adorable Perfections, in ascribing whereof we are to join with the Heavenly Host in that Seraphick Hymn, *Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive Honour, and Glory and Power, for thou hast created all things, and for thy Pleasure they are and were created*. So that this is the *Hallowing the Name of God*, which is the Work of Saints and Angels in Heaven, who cease not Day or Night, saying, *Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Hosts*; and which we are likewise to begin here on Earth, not only rendring to him all Praise and Thanksgiving our selves, but wishing and praying that all others may hallow and adore his holy Name, that all Minds may entertain worthy Thoughts of him, and that all Tongues may celebrate and speak of his Praise. Moreover, because the Name of God may be honour'd or dishonour'd by our Actions as well as Words, we are directed to do all those things whereby God may be glorify'd, and avoid all those whereby his Name may be dishonour'd or blasphem'd.

This is the first and great thing we pray for, when we say, *Hallow'd be thy Name*; to wit, that God may be glorify'd, and that all things in Heaven and Earth may promote his Honour, and sound forth his Praise.

But beside this, there are some other things, which by reason of their relation unto God, have his Name stamp'd upon them, and therefore are stil'd sacred, and are to be us'd and accounted as holy unto the Lord; not by any original essential Holiness, which

which is peculiar to God only, but by a deriv'd relative Holiness, which is communicated to all those things that bear his Name, and belong to him. As,

1. There are some Persons who are set apart to minister about holy things, and are therefore stil'd God's Ministers, being call'd by his Name, and commission'd by his Authority to teach, to bless and to pray for the People: and as these are to demean themselves as holy Persons, appointed to attend the Service of God, so are they to be honour'd as God's Ambassadors, and treated as the Ministers of Jesus Christ; the Relation they have to God, and their Dedication to his Service, ought to secure them from Contempt, and procure them the Love and Veneration of Mankind.

2. There are some Times set apart for the Worship and Service of God, and are therefore call'd by his Name; such is the Sabbath or Lord's-day, which being dedicated to him, and challeng'd as his, is to be hallow'd and kept holy to the Lord, by setting it apart from the daily and ordinary Business of our Calling, and devoting it to the holy Offices of Religion: for we are commanded, to *Remember the Sabbath-day to keep it holy*, God claiming it as his, and by his own resting on that day hath bless'd and hallow'd it to his own Service.

3. There are some Places set apart and dedicated to the Worship of God, which are call'd by his Name, and are likewise to be kept holy unto him: This is evident not only from the Care and Cost bestow'd on the Temple by God's own Appointment, under the Old Testament, but likewise from our Saviour's Indignation and Severity against the Profaners of it, under the New; for he *whip'd the Buyers and Sellers out of the Temple*, and sharply rebuk'd those that made *the House of Prayer a Den of Thieves*. In like manner we find the Apostle checking some among the *Corinthians* for polluting those holy Places, saying, *What, have ye not Houses to eat and drink in, or despise ye the Church of God?* 1 Cor. 11. 22.

4. There is a certain Portion of our Possessions set apart by God the Giver of all, for the maintenance of his Service: This being reserv'd by him as his, and call'd by his Name, is likewise to be hallow'd or kept holy; and that is, by applying it to those Uses which God has appointed, without alienating or detaining any part of it; for to withhold this consecrated part of our Substance, or to turn it to any other use, is to rob God, and to bring a Curse upon all that we possess.

Lastly,

Lastly, Because the Name of God may be hallow'd or profan'd by our Lives and Actions, as well as Words; we are requir'd by our good Works to glorify God, and to take care that by our evil Deeds his Name be not blasphem'd.

Thus we see the sense of this Petition, and what we pray for, when we say, *Hallow'd be thy Name*; namely, that God in all things may be glorify'd, that we never mention any of his Titles without the Honour and Respect due to them; that we demean our selves suitably to all his Attributes, loving him for his Goodness, admiring his Wisdom, trusting his Power, believing his Promises, fearing his Threats, and at all times celebrating the Praises due to his Name.

Moreover, we pray that all this may be done, not by our selves alone, but by all others, that they may all entertain honourable and worthy Thoughts of God, and make his Glory the great end and scope of all their Actions; that they may all adore his Perfections, celebrate his Praises, and have a due regard to all that bears his Name or belongs to him. In a word, we are here taught to honour God with our Heart, by bearing a sincere Love to him and his ways; with our Mouths, by frequent Acknowledgments of him, and speaking well of all he doth; with our Lives, by living as becometh his Children and Servants, that *our Light may so shine before Men, that they seeing our good Works may glorify our Father which is in Heaven.*

This is to Hallow the Name of God; which being made the first Petition in our Prayers, shews that we are in the first place to mind the Honour of our Maker, and to direct all our Thoughts, Words and Actions to the Advancement of his Glory: and as our Saviour hath made this the principal Subject of our Prayers, so ought we to make it the main Scope of all our Endeavours, lest our Practices give the lie to our Prayers, and we by wicked Lives blemish and blaspheme that holy Name which we desire should be Hallow'd.

DISCOURSE VI.

Luke 11. 2. *Thy Kingdom come.*

HAVING explain'd the first Petition in the Lord's Prayer, and shew'd what we are to understand by *Hallowing the Name of God*; to wit, the Advancement of his Honour and Glory: I proceed now to the

Second, which contains the way and means conducing thereunto, and that is, by the Propagation of his Kingdom; for which we pray in the next words, *Thy Kingdom come.*

This Petition seems more especially to respect that time and state of things at which it was deliver'd, when that Kingdom, which St. *John* a little before declar'd to be at hand, and which Christ himself told some standing about him that they should shortly see, began to appear; at which time it was very proper to pray for the coming and propagating of that Kingdom, which was promis'd and long expected, and then seem'd to have its Beginning. But tho this Petition seems chiefly calculated for that time, when this Kingdom began, yet is it still seasonable and requisite to be put up for the Growth and Increase of it, that it may be not only confirm'd and continu'd, but may likewise prosper and flourish in the World; and therefore in treating of it, I must enquire,

First, What is here meant by the Kingdom of God.

Secondly, What by the Coming of this Kingdom. And,

Thirdly, What we pray for, when we say, *Thy Kingdom come.*

For the *First*, We must distinguish of a twofold Kingdom. The one general, which God exercises over the whole World. The other particular, by which he governs his Church and People.

1. His general Kingdom extends it self over all things in Heaven and Earth: for as God made the World, and all the Creatures in it, so is he the supreme Monarch and Sovereign of it, all inferior Princes being his Viceroys and Deputys, to rule for and under him; for which reason he is often stil'd *King of Kings*, and *Lord of Lords*. Of this is that of the Psalmist, *The Lord hath prepar'd his Throne in the Heavens, and his Kingdom ruleth over all.*

all. To this Kingdom not only all the Powers on Earth, but all the Devils in Hell are subject; they are all reserv'd in Chains of Darkness, and can go no farther than they will let them: to this likewise all wicked Men are and must be subject; God Almighty restraining and punishing them as he sees cause, saying with him in the Parable, *But those mine Enemies that would not that I should reign over them, bring them hither, and slay them before me,* Luke 19. 27. But beside this universal Kingdom that ruleth over all, there is,

2. A more particular Kingdom, which God exercises over his Church and People, *ruling in their Hearts by Faith, and guiding them by his Holy Spirit.* This is in Scripture call'd the Kingdom of the *Messias*, or the Mediatorial Kingdom which God exerciseth by the Mediator, to whom *he hath given all Power both in Heaven and Earth*; and is therefore sometimes stil'd the Kingdom of *Christ*, sometimes the Kingdom of *Heaven*, and sometimes the Kingdom of *God*. And this particular Kingdom is likewise double, *viz.* The Kingdom of Grace, and the Kingdom of Glory; the one respects this Life, the other the next.

1. The Kingdom of Grace consists partly of all those that give up their Names to Christ by Baptism, that embrace the Gospel, and by an outward Profession own themselves for his Servants and Subjects, tho they do not always answer it by a futable Conversation; and partly likewise of those that pay him a true and real Subjection, yielding up their Hearts to him, and leading their Lives in due Obedience to his Laws. This is *the Kingdom of God within us*, of which we read Luke 17. 21. and this consists not (as the Apostle tells us) in *Meat and Drink*, or any external Observances, but in *Righteousness, and Peace, and Joy in the Holy Ghost*. The former of these are the visible Subjects of Christ's Kingdom, being known by an outward Profession; the latter the invisible Subjects, being known to God only. In this Kingdom of Grace the Holy Spirit of God is the Regent, the Ministers of Christ are the Ambassadors, the Gospel is the Law by which 'tis govern'd, the Sacraments are the Seals by which all things are convey'd and confirm'd; the Discipline whereof consists in bruising his Enemies with a Rod of Iron, and ruling his Friends with a Scepter of Righteousness.

2. The Kingdom of Glory is the Completion of this Kingdom of Grace hereafter in Heaven, where all his Foes being made his Footstool, himself will be advanc'd upon a Throne of

Glory, and bring all his faithful Subjects to a *Kingdom prepar'd for them before the Foundation of the World*; of which we read, *Mat. 25.*

This then is the Kingdom, which is chiefly meant of this peculiar Kingdom exercis'd over the Church and People of God, together with the two great Branches of it, the Kingdom of Grace here, and of Glory hereafter.

But *Secondly*, What are we to understand by the *Coming of this Kingdom*?

In answer to which, two things are manifestly intended by it.

1. The setting up of this Kingdom where it is not: And,
2. The preserving and increasing of it where it already is.

1. I say, this Expression imports the setting up of this Kingdom where it is not. When Christ prescrib'd this Petition, his Kingdom was very imperfectly known to the Jews, and not at all known or embrac'd by the Gentiles, but rather oppos'd and resisted by both.

As for the Jews, tho this Kingdom of Christ commenc'd immediately after the Fall, in that Promise, that *the Seed of the Woman should bruise the Serpent's Head*; and tho it were after more plainly declar'd to *Abraham*, in the Promise that *in his Seed should all the Nations of the Earth be blessed*: yet their Knowledg both of Christ and his Kingdom was so obscure and imperfect, that few of them believ'd or submitted to it; for when Christ came, the main Body of that great People rejected him, saying, *We will not have this Man to reign over us*, Luke 19.

As for the Gentiles, they were profess'd Enemies to this Kingdom, being *Aliens to the Commonwealth of Israel*, and *Strangers to the Covenant of Promise*, without Christ, and without God in the World, Eph. 2. 12. They had no other God but *the God of this World*, the Prince of the Power of the Air, the Spirit that ruleth in the Children of Disobedience. Now the end of Christ's coming being to destroy this Kingdom of Satan, and to erect his own Throne in mens Hearts, to turn them from *Darkness to Light*, and from the Power of Satan unto God, we are here taught to wish and pray for the Accomplishment hereof; that all the Kingdoms of the World may become the *Kingdoms of Christ*, and that *all Nations may see the Salvation of God*. 'Twas prophesy'd of old concerning the Jews, that they should look up to him whom they had pierc'd; and of the Gentiles, that they should come in and submit to his righteous

†

Scepter,

Scepter, he having *the Heathen for his Inheritance, and the uttermost Parts of the Earth for his Possession*. Now the fulfilling of these Prophecies is the Coming of this Kingdom, which signifies the Enlargement and Propagation of it, by the Accession of Jew and Gentile, the two great Enemies of it; by whose Submission he becomes a *Light to lighten the Gentiles, and the Glory of his People Israel*.

2. The Coming of Christ's Kingdom signifies not only the setting it up where it is not, but the Continuance and Increase of it where it is. Upon our Saviour's coming the Light of the Gospel began to dawn upon the benighted World, which after *shin'd out more and more to the perfect Day*. Many of the Jews embrac'd his Doctrine, and the Gentiles also submitted to the Scepter of his Kingdom, at which time there *were daily added to the Church such as should be saved*. Now this Petition, *Thy Kingdom come*, directs us to pray for the farther Progress and Propagation of it, that the Light of his Gospel may shine in all the dark Corners of the World, that his Kingdom may be set up and spread over the face of the whole Earth, and that Christianity may not only obtain every where, but that it may be entertain'd with a due Faith and sincere Obedience, that Christ's Kingdom may prevail over all the Powers of Darkness, and that he may *reign till he hath put all Enemies under his feet*. Thus we see what the Kingdom of Christ is, and likewise what is meant by the Coming of it; from whence we learn in the

Third place, What it is we pray for, when we put up this Petition, which is for the Propagation and Prosperity of Christ's Kingdom. And tho this Petition was fram'd by our Saviour, as most befitting the Time and State of Affairs when he prescrib'd it, which was at the beginning of the Gospel; yet it still lies upon us as a Duty to put up the same Petition, and will be so till the end of the World; and that with respect both to the Kingdom of Grace, and the Kingdom of Glory. For there are many Parts of the World, where this Kingdom of Grace, or the Gospel of Christ is not yet come, and many things are to be pray'd for in respect of them. Again, even in those places where this Kingdom of Grace is in some measure come, there are many things to be ask'd for the more effectual and successful Exercise of it. And then for the Kingdom of Glory, that not commencing till this World is ended, there are many things we are

to beg of God, in order to our Preparation for and Reception into it.

As for those Places and Nations, where the Kingdom of Christ is not yet set up, of which sort there are but too many, as the large Countries under the *Turk* and other Heathen Emperors: For these we are to pray ;

1. That the Kingdom of Grace may come among them ; and to that end, that the Gospel of Christ may be made known and preach'd unto them, that being the ordinary way and means of propagating and establishing of Christ's Kingdom ; for *Faith comes by Hearing* (saith the Apostle) *and Hearing by the Word of God*: And the same Apostle stiles the Gospel, *the Power of God unto Salvation*, Rom. 1. 16. And therefore we are to pray that those Inhabitants of the World that *sit in Darknes*, and the *Regions of the Shadow of Death*, may have the Light of Divine Truths arise and shine into their Hearts, that the Gospel may be publish'd to them, and have a free Passage into all the Corners of the Earth ; that they who at present are Slaves to the Devil, and do his Work, may be converted and baptiz'd, renouncing their old Master, and becoming Subjects of Christ's Kingdom. But because there is *no Hearing without a Preacher, nor any Preaching except they be sent*, Rom. 10. 14, 15. we are therefore,

2. To pray *the Lord of the Harvest, that he would send forth Laborers into his Vineyard*. 'Tis by the Ministry of the Word, that the Gospel is to sound to all the Earth, and the Word to the ends of the World : therefore we are to beg for able and faithful Pastors to be sent abroad to feed the People with Knowledg and Understanding, that *the Word of God may run and be glorify'd*, and the People every where may be led into the ways of Truth and Peace by the hands of *Moses and Aaron*. But because without God's Blessing all these things will prove ineffectual (for tho *Paul* may plant, and *Apollo* may water, yet 'tis God only that gives the Increase) we are therefore,

3. To pray that God would bless the Endeavours of all that are sent upon this Errand, that his Work may prosper in their hands, and his Word in their mouths may prevail to the *pulling down the Strong Holds of Sin and Satan, and the building up many in their most boly Faith* ; that all Men may flock into the Kingdom of Christ, and the *Earth be fill'd with the Knowledge of God, as the Waters cover the Sea*.

These things are necessary to be pray'd for, that the Kingdom of Grace may come, where 'tis not yet known or profess'd; which being agreeable to the Will of God, and here directed to by our Blessed Saviour, must be acceptable to him: and if duly ask'd and endeavour'd for, will not fail of a Blessing.

Moreover 2dly, For those Places where the Kingdom of Christ is already come, and his Sovereignty own'd by an outward Profession, we pray for a real Subjection to the Laws of it; that all who embrace the Gospel of Christ, may walk worthy of it, and adorn their Profession by a futable Conversation: for without this 'tis all but Mockery, and saying with the Jews, *Hail King*, and crucifying him.

Furthermore, when we say, *Thy Kingdom come*, we pray for the Continuance and Preservation of it, that it may not be destroy'd by Persecution, nor corrupted by Heresy, nor undermin'd by Schism, Hypocrisy, or Profaneness; but that the pure Word of God may be protected by pious Princes, preach'd by learned and faithful Pastors, and practis'd by a willing and obedient People, who may receive the Truth not only in the Light, but the Love of it, and lead their Lives in all due Obedience and Observance to it. In a word, we pray that Christ may reign in the Hearts of all his Subjects; that God would convert or confound all his Enemies, and bring down every high thing that exalts it self against the Kingdom of Christ.

All this is imply'd in this devout Petition, which we daily put up for the coming of Christ's Kingdom of Grace here. Then,

Lastly, For his Kingdom of Glory hereafter, we pray that that may come too in its due time, that the number of the Elect being accomplish'd, he would hasten his second Coming, and receive his faithful Servants to that Glory which he had with his Father before the Foundation of the World. We read in Scripture of this visible and glorious Manifestation of Christ's Kingdom, who will come in the Clouds of Heaven attended with his holy Angels to judg the World; at which time he will dispense his Mercy and Pardon to all his faithful Subjects, making them Sharers of his Joy, and Partakers of his everlasting Kingdom; and likewise glorify his Justice in the final Doom and Destruction of all his Enemies, who refusing to submit to his Laws, shall receive the just Reward of their Rebellion and Disobedience.

Now tho good Men, for the sake of the Wicked, may desire the respiting of that time, that by Repentance they may escape
the

the Horror and Punishment of it; yet for their own sakes they have reason to long and pray for that happy Day, when they are to enter into their Master's Joy, and be publicly receiv'd into his Kingdom of Glory, which is sufficient to make them join with the Souls under the Altar, and say, *Come Lord Jesus, come quickly.*

Thus we see what we pray for in this Petition; by which we learn the Wisdom and Piety of our Church in teaching us to pray for all Jews, Turks, Infidels, and Hereticks, that God would take from them all Ignorance, Hardness of Heart, and Contempt of his Word, and so fetch them home to his own Flock, that they may be saved among the Remnant of the true Israelites, and be made one Fold under one Shepherd.

Wherefore to conclude, Let us be ever mindful what we ask of God, when we say, *Thy Kingdom come*; namely, that his Kingdom may be advanc'd and enlarg'd in the World, that it may come within us by a hearty Subjection to his Will, and without us by a general Submission and Conversion of all his Enemies: and to these our Prayers let us add our best Endeavours, so shall we from true Members of Christ's Kingdom of Grace, be in due time translated to his Kingdom of Glory; which God grant, &c.

DISCOURSE VII.

Luke 11. 2. latter part, *Thy Will be done, as in Heaven, so in Earth.*

I Have spoken to the two first Petitions in the Lord's Prayer, which relate to the Glory of God, the prime End of all things, viz. the *Hallowing of his Name*, and the *Coming of his Kingdom*. I proceed now to the Third, which concerns a due Obedience to his Will, contain'd in these words, *Thy Will be done in Earth, as it is in Heaven.* In which we may observe,

1. The Petition it self, *Thy Will be done in Earth.* And,
2. The Manner or Measure of doing it, *as it is in Heaven.*

In treating of both which I must enquire,

First, What is that *Will of God*, which we desire may be done on Earth. *Secondly*,

Secondly, How this Will of God is done in Heaven. And,
Thirdly, What we pray for, when we desire that the Will of
God may be done on Earth, as it is in Heaven. For the

First, The Will of God is distinguish'd into his secret and reveal'd Will; according to that of Moses, *Secret things belong to God, but things reveal'd to us and our Children, that we may do all things reveal'd in his Law*, Deut. 29. 29.

1. The Secret Will of God is his eternal Purpose or Decree about the Event of things, whereby he orders all according to the secret Counsel of his own Will. Of this kind is the Knowledge of the Times and Seasons, which God has reserv'd to himself, as the Day of Judgment, the Number of our Days, the Fall of Antichrist, the Conversion of the Jews, the Salvation of the Heathens, and the like: All which being kept secret from us, 'twill be too much Curiosity and Presumption to pry into or determine any thing about them. By this Will of his *he doth whatever pleaseth him in Heaven and Earth, and in all deep places*; much of which, as we are not worthy to know, so neither will it become us too nicely to enquire. This Will of his must and will be done, whether we pray for it or against it; and therefore our Duty is to acquiesce in all Resolutions of it, and to say always, *God's Will be done*.

2. His Reveal'd Will, which alone belongs to us, is that wise Discovery of his Mind and Will, made to us in the Holy Scriptures; wherein he has declar'd all that we are concern'd to know or practise. And this again is divided into his Will of Precept, and his Will of Providence: by the one, we are directed what we are to do; by the other, what and how we are to suffer.

The Will of his Precept relates to our Lives and Actions, directing us how we are to walk, so as to please God: *He hath shew'd thee, O Man (saith Micah) what is good, and what the Lord thy God requires of thee*, &c. Mic. 6. 8. *This is the Will of God (saith the Apostle) even your Sanctification*, &c. 1 Thess. 4. 5. And elsewhere, *God hath call'd us to Holiness, and to walk unblamably before him in Love*. This Will of God the Apostle would have us not only to know, but practise; first searching *what is the good, perfect, and acceptable Will of God*, and then making it the Rule of our Lives and Actions; that we may be *perfectly instructed in every good Work, to do his will*, Heb. 13. 21.

The Will of his Providence respects all Events of things, whether prosperous or adverse ; in which we are to submit to the Will of God, and rest satisfy'd in all the Divine Dispensations, acknowledging the Power, Wisdom, and Goodness of God in all that befalls both our selves and others. This is briefly *the Will of God*. But,

How is it said to *be done in Earth* ? Why, two ways, either actively, by obeying what God commands, or passively, by bearing what he is pleas'd to inflict. In the

First sense, the Will of God is said to be done by us, when we yield a ready Compliance to his Precepts, and order our ways by the Direction of his Laws ; when we make his Will the Standard and Measure of our Actions, and say with the Psalmist in the Person of our Saviour, *Lo I come to do thy Will, O God, yea thy Law is within my Heart*.

In the latter sense his Will is done by us, when we patiently bear what he thinks fit to lay upon us, resigning up our Wills to his, and saying with our Saviour, in taking off the bitter Cup, *Not my Will, but thine be done*. To both these we stand oblig'd by the Principles of Reason and Gratitude, which require us to obey our Maker, who has the sole Power to order and command us, especially when like a gracious and tender-hearted Father, he only consults our Good, and does far better things for us than we can do for our selves ; which should teach us in all cases to say with good old *Eli*, *It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good* ; and with *David*, *I was dumb, and open'd not my mouth, for it is thy doing*. But for the fuller understanding of this Petition, we must enquire,

Secondly, How the Will of God is done in Heaven ; for that being made the Measure and Pattern of our doing it here on Earth, it will be requisite for us to know our Platform, that we may the better conform to and act by it. And here we must note, that the Will of God is done by the Angels and glorify'd Spirits in Heaven, in the most perfect and acceptable manner, and indeed in a way not attainable by us in this imperfect State. However, our Saviour here directing us to pray for it, has will'd us to propound to our selves the Example of their Obedience, and to use our best Endeavours to imitate and come as near it as we may : To which end we must know,

1. That

1. That the Will of God is done in Heaven *readily*, without Delay. The holy Angels are still about his Throne, waiting his Commands, and are ever ready to do his Pleasure : no sooner do they know their Master's Will, but they presently set about it, and without any dispute or delay most willingly perform it. Hence we find them always painted with Wings, to shew the nimbleness and readiness of their Motion, that they are not slow and tardy in their Maker's work, but are ever upon the wing, and fly in the execution of his Commands. These Angels of his are sometimes stil'd, *The Eyes of the Lord, that run to and fro the Earth*, Zach. 4. 10. sometimes *ministring Spirits, that minister to the Heirs of Saivation*, Heb. 1. 14. all which lets us know the forwardness and readiness of their Obedience.

2. The Will of God is done in Heaven *cheerfully*, without grudging: All things there are done with alacrity and delight, there is no murmuring or complaining, no uneasiness under their Task; but their very Work is Wages, and their Duty is both their Desire and their Happiness. Hence the Angels in Heaven are represented to be still singing and praising God, and delighting to do his Will: their whole Employment is Hallelujahs and Songs of Praise; and all the Blessed do above, is still to sing, and still to love: and sure that must be perform'd with great alacrity and cheerfulness, that is done with hearts full of Joy, and mouths full of Melody.

3. The Will of God is done in Heaven *sincerely*, without Hypocrisy: There is no dissembling or double-dealing in those pure and spotless Regions, no flattery or falshood among those glorify'd Spirits, they are not doing one thing and designing another, nor look different ways; but as the Cherubims in the Temple look'd all toward the Mercy-Seat, so do those Cherubims above look always to the Throne of God, to receive his Commands, and fulfil his Will.

4. The Will of God is done in Heaven *thorowly*, without Partiality: There is no picking and chusing among those blest Inhabitants, they do not take care to execute one Command, and leave another undone; but they are still accomplishing the whole Will of God, and leave not the least hint or intimation of his Word unfulfil'd: for the Will of God being the reason and measure of their Obedience, it must extend to all his Commands, which have the same stamp of a divine Authority upon them, and that must render their Obedience both uniform and universal.

C c c c

5. The

5. The Will of God is done in Heaven *unanimously*, without Discord or Division; there is a perfect Harmony, Consent, and Unity among the blessed Spirits above, who all join in one Consort, and by united Hearts and Voices compleat the Musick of the Celestial Quire. There is no Jarring or Discord to be heard there, no Sects or Factions, no contrary Interests and Designs, no secret Grudges or open Contentions; but all conspire together in perfect Peace and Concord, every one moving in his own place without thwarting and disturbance, and all uniting together with one Mind and one Mouth to glorify their great Creator. This is the Will of God, and thus is it done in Heaven.

Lastly, The Will of God is done in Heaven *constantly*, without Weariness or Defection; for they *cease not day or night saying, Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of Hosts, which was, which is, and which is to come.* They are constantly *singing Praises to him that sitteth on the Throne, and to the Lamb for evermore.* There is no Weariness or Fainting among those glorify'd Spirits; their Hallelujahs are incessant, and their Praises know no end or decay.

This is the Pattern here set for our Imitation, which tho we cannot at present come up exactly to, nor keep pace in our Obedience with those swift-wing'd Messengers of Heaven, yet we are directed to follow, and come as near them as we can. And this will lead me to the

Third Thing propounded, viz. What we pray for when we say, Thy Will be done in Earth as it is in Heaven.

In general, we pray for a Complacence and Satisfaction of Mind in all God's Proceedings, submitting to his Pleasure, obeying his Precepts, and humbly acquiescing in all the Dispensations of his Providence; not opposing our Will to his, but disclaiming our own Judgments, and renouncing our Desires, when they appear inconsistent with his, and in all things resigning our selves to his Wisdom, with *not my Will but thine be done.* More particularly we pray,

1. That we may do the Will of God as readily as the Angels do in Heaven, who dispute not the Equity of his Commands, nor complain of the Difficulty of his Work, but presently set about it, and run with cheerfulness in the ways of his Commandments; so ought we to be ever ready to every good Word and Work, doing his Will without delay or procrastination, saying with David, *I made haste, and delay'd not to keep thy Commandments.* And

†

likewise

likewise relishing a Sweetness and Delight in doing the Will of God, saying with the devout Psalmist, *O how I love thy Law, all the day long is my study in it; and elsewhere, I delight to do thy Will, O God.*

2. We pray that we may do the Will of God heartily and sincerely, as the Angels do in Heaven, who do their Master's Will not only with Alacrity and Vigour, but with Integrity and Singleness of Heart. Those flaming Seraphims are all Love and Rapture, having the constant Fire of Divine Love burning in their Breasts, which makes them observe the Commands of God with Ardency and Affection. So likewise ought we to obey from the Heart the Commands of our Maker, being *not slothful in business, but fervent in Spirit, serving the Lord; not with Eye or Lip-Service as Men-pleasers, but doing it heartily as unto the Lord.*

3. We pray that we may do the Will of God fully and impartially, as the Angels do in Heaven; for they do not perform their Duty by halves, or make the doing of one thing compound for the Neglect of another, but pay an uniform and universal Obedience to all his Commands: they are ever ready to execute the whole Will of God, and bear an equal Regard to all his Precepts, as having all the same Authority. This we should not only pray for, but endeavour likewise to put in practice. We find this the frequent Subject of the Psalmist's Prayers, that God would direct him to *love all his Precepts, and to hate every false way; withal adding, Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect to all thy Commandments, Psal. 119. 6, 128.* And Zachary and Elizabeth are commended for *walking in all the Commandments of the Lord blameless.* These are noble Patterns for our Imitation, and yet our Saviour here shews us a more excellent way, willing us to pray, that *the Will of God may be done on Earth, as fully and thoroughly as it is in Heaven.*

4. We pray that we may do the Will of God unanimously as the Angels do in Heaven. There is no Dissension or Nonconformity among the Inhabitants of those blessed Regions, but they all join together with one Heart and one Voice to sing the Praises of their Maker; so likewise ought we with one Mind and one mouth to glorify God: this is to begin our Heaven here on Earth, and to do the Will of God here below as it is done above, by joining with them in one Consent and Harmony of Affection and Devotion; which is a matter highly worthy of the united Prayers and Endeavours of all Christians. And therefore we find our

Blessed Saviour, who prescrib'd this Petition, upon his leaving the World, praying that all his Followers upon Earth *might be one*, as he and his *Father were one* in Heaven; and that there might be the same Unity, Consent, and Harmony among God's Children here below, as is among the glorify'd Saints above.

Lastly, We pray that we may *do the Will of God* constantly, as the Angels do in Heaven; for they never faint or grow weary of their Work, but are always attending his Throne, still blessing and praising God, and never cease their triumphant Hallelujahs: sutable whereunto, the Apostle wills us to *pray without ceasing*, being *stedfast, unmovable, always abounding in the Work of the Lord*. Not that we are to be always upon our knees, or continually employ'd in the actual Exercises of Devotion, for that would interfere with other Duties, and is inconsistent with our present State; but that we be still in a Disposition of serving and praising God, and never grow weary of well-doing, knowing that *we shall reap if we faint not*.

This is the Sense of this Petition, which we are therefore diligently to mind and desire in rehearsing of it.

DISCOURSE VIII.

Luke 11. 3. *Give us day by day our daily Bread.*

HAVING finish'd the three first Petitions that relate to the Glory of God, and thereby render'd that Tribute of Honor and Praise due to him; I proceed, as we are here directed, to those that concern our own Welfare: for after we have paid our due Respect to God, we are allow'd to ask good things for our selves; and having fought his Kingdom in the first place, may beg the Supply of all our Wants; beginning, as Nature prompts us, with what is necessary for the Preservation of our Lives or Being, in these words, *Give us this day our daily Bread*.

In explaining of which Petition I must enquire,

First, What we are to understand here by *Bread*.

Secondly, What by *our daily Bread*.

Thirdly, What by limiting of it to *this day*, or *day by day*.

Fourthly, What we pray for, when we ask our *daily Bread*.

†

For

For the *First*, By Bread here we understand not that Sacramental Bread, or *Bread of Life*, which was consecrated to represent the Body of Christ, and convey to us the Benefit of those Sufferings he underwent in it; for tho we find the Disciples praying, *Lord evermore give us of this Bread*, yet this was instituted long after this Petition of the Lord's Prayer was fram'd, and commenc'd not till a little before our Saviour's Death, which it was design'd to represent, and so cannot but by way of Allusion be intended here. Beside,

The Wants of Mankind are partly temporal, and partly spiritual; the one respects the Necessities of the Body, and the other of the Soul, for the Supply of both which we are here taught to pray, viz. for corporal Food to supply the Wants of the former in this Petition, and spiritual Food for the Needs of the other, imply'd in some of the foregoing and following Petitions.

Nor yet 2. are we to understand here simply and singly plain natural Bread made of Corn, which is in Scripture stil'd *the Staff of Life*, and is said to *strengthen man's Heart*; for tho this be included as the principal part, yet is it not the whole that is intended by it, for *Man liveth not by Bread alone*. And therefore,

3. By Bread here we are to understand all manner of Provision, all that Meat and Drink that is necessary to the Sustenance of human Life, and whatever is requir'd to the Support of our frail Nature. And because many things are needful to that end, as Food, Rayment, Habitation, and the like, they are all compriz'd under the name of Bread: This being the principal thing necessary to the preserving of Life, call'd therefore the Staff of Bread, is by a Figure put to signify all other Necessaries; and as a *Famine of Bread* is in Scripture set to signify the Want of all Provisions, so by giving of Bread is express'd the Supply of all outward and bodily Wants, or the bestowing of all those temporal and earthly Blessings that are requisite to the Being, the Comfort, and Welfare of this present Life, such as Health, Safety, Success, Wealth, Friends, and the like; all which we are here empower'd to pray for, as far as we shall need, and as God shall see fit for us. This for the Bread.

Secondly, What is meant here by *our daily Bread*. The Word in the Original is ἀρτον βρώσιον, which some translate substantial Bread, and would have it understood of that *living Bread*
that

that came down from Heaven, as alone worthy to be crav'd at the hands of God : but this Petition, as was before observ'd, referring chiefly, if not only, to our temporal Wants, must be meant of that corporal Food appointed for the Sustenance of our Bodies, and not of that spiritual Food of our Souls, which is elsewhere pray'd for. Others therefore more fitly understand it of Bread, necessary *ἐν τῇ βίῳ*, to the Support of our Being, and so make it the same with *Agar's* Prayer, Prov. 30. 8. *Feed me with Food convenient for me.* And indeed it seems more agreeable to the Original, to render it our necessary or convenient, than our daily Bread ; for *ἐπίσσιος* hath no reference at all to the Time, but to the Nature and Necessity of our Food : beside, the time of giving and receiving this Bread, is sufficiently express'd in the Petition, by *this day*, or *day by day*, which makes the Addition of daily to it somewhat superfluous in so short a Form. And here the great thing to be observ'd is, That we are directed to pray not for Dainties or Superfluities, but only for necessary and convenient Food. 'Tis *ἄρτος* Bread that we are bid to ask, which you know is plain Fare, the most simple, common and homely Diet : And 'tis *ἄρτος ἐπίσσιος*, Bread necessary to support our Being, not Plenty or Superfluities to feed our Luxury : *τροφὴν* not *τευφὴν* (as *St. Chrysostom* expresses it) that is, Necessaries not Delicacies, Meat to fill our Bellies, not to feed our Fancies or please our wanton Appetite. We are not warranted to ask Varieties, or to affect Daintiness and Splendor, but to be content to have our Necessities supply'd, and to desire only what is convenient for us : Because the Body cannot minister to the Soul in Religious Matters without Food and Rayment, therefore we are allow'd to crave so much as may be needful and subservient to those ends ; more may be a Clog and Hindrance to us in our way to Heaven, and therefore we are not bid to ask it : We may indeed, and ought soberly and thankfully to enjoy what God sends, but we may not presume to ask or desire more than our Necessities require. This was *Agar's* Prayer, *Give me neither Poverty nor Riches*, for there are great Inconveniences in both these, but *feed me with Food convenient for me.* He desir'd not Riches, lest they should tempt him to Pride, Luxury, and forgetting of God ; and he pray'd against Poverty, lest that should make him reach out *his hands to steal*, and his Tongue to *take God's Name in vain.* To prevent both which he crav'd neither Fulness of Bread, nor Want of it, neither to swim in Plenty,

nor

nor to pine away with Penury, neither to fare deliciously every day, nor lack convenient Food; in a word, he was content with a Competency, and desir'd no more. *Jacob's Vow* had the same Bounds, *Gen. 28. 20. If the Lord will give me Bread to eat, and Raiment to put on, then the Lord shall be my God.* Where he limits his Desires only to a Competency, craving no more than Food and Raiment to arm him against Hunger and Nakedness, the two great Necessities of Nature: And our Saviour's Direction here reaches no farther, than our necessary or daily Bread.

But is this Competency the same to all, or does it admit of degrees? and if so, by what Standard are we to measure this necessary and convenient Food?

In answer to which; a Competency may be measur'd two ways, either by the Necessities of Nature, in which sense that is a Competency which is sufficient to support our natural Life or Health.

Or by the Necessities of our Condition or Station in the World, in which sense that is a Competency, which is necessary to maintain us in that Place or Station wherein God hath set us; that which is sufficient for one of a low Degree, would fall very short to one of a higher and nobler Station.

The Office and Dignity of a Publick Magistrate requires more to support it, than the meaner Circumstances of a private Person; and that which would enrich a Subject, may leave a Prince in a poor helpless Condition.

So that the several Places, Qualities and Degrees of Men are to be consider'd in this Matter: and as many more things are necessary and convenient for some, than for others; so may they be lawfully desir'd and sought after, which is the sense of the Apostle, when he bids us to *provide things honest*, that is, decent and honourable *in the sight of all Men*, *Rom. 12. 17.* This for the *daily Bread.* But,

Thirdly, What is meant by the Particle *Our* daily Bread? This was not added for nothing, but to give us to understand that every one is to live upon his own, and not another's Bread: 'Tis the idle Drone that lives upon others Labour, whereas we are requir'd to *work with our hands the thing that is good, that we may eat our own Bread, and likewise give to him that needeth*, *Ephes. 4. 28. 2 Thess. 3. 12.* The Bread we here pray for is not stol'n Bread, no Bread of Deceit taken out of another's Mouth; but it must be our own Bread gotten by our own Labour, not procur'd by idle begging

begging or stealing, it must be Bread gotten by honest and just Ways, by the Sweat of our own Brows, not by Fraud, Sacrilege or Oppression. 'Twas the first Ordinance of God, that in the Sweat of their Brows every one should earn and eat their Bread, not tear it from others by Violence, Rapine or Injustice. Bread honestly gotten is commonly sweet, and hath the Blessing of God going along with it; whereas the Bread of Deceit is still follow'd with a Curse: and tho stol'n Waters may be sweet in the Mouth, yet they turn to Gall and Wormwood in the Belly, and prove always bitter in the latter end.

This for *our daily Bread*, which we see is what we may rightfully call our own; and this we may ask in such a measure, as is not only futed to the Necessities of Nature, but to the Charge and Burden of those Places and Stations wherein God hath set us: Only care must be taken that we suffer not Ambition and Covetousness to impose upon us, by creating more Needs than we ought, nor measuring our Necessities rather by inordinate Desires than any real Wants; and likewise that we spend not the Overplus in Riot and Luxury, for that is the Bread of the Poor which we take out of their Mouths when we spend it upon our Lusts. But,

Fourthly, What is meant by limiting our Request to *this Day*, or asking *day by day our daily Bread*? Why, this is added to signify our total Dependence upon God, that we subsist continually upon his Bounty; we thereby disclaim all Confidence in our selves, or in any other means to maintain and support us beside the Divine Providence, not relying upon any Store we have laid up, or any Estate we have gotten, not trusting to any Contrivance or Industry of our own, nor any Succour or Relief from others, but looking every day for the Bread of that Day to be dealt out to us, and receiving it as a constant Dole at God's Hands. Again,

We thereby cast off all inordinate Cares and Fears about to Morrow, owning that sufficient to the Day is the Bread thereof: We thereby shew, that we are not too solicitous for the future, but *cast our whole Care upon God who careth for us, and knoweth that we have need of all these things*. "We affect not (as one well expresses it) to be so much before hand, as not to need God's constant Assistance; and therefore we ask not for what may suffice for a long Time, for many Years, Months or Days, but
" that

“ that God would give us to day, or day by day, what is needful
“ for us. Moreover,

We are hereby taught to depend, not only on the Divine Power and Allsufficiency to provide for us, but to rely on his continual Goodness and Readiness to help us, “ desiring (as another well directs on these words) “ not to have our Portion all at once, or “ in our own hands, lest we should be too lavish of it; but making God our Storehouse, to whom, as to the Fountain of all “ good Things, we every day resort, being well assur’d of the “ Constancy of his Love and Liberality towards us, and that he “ will be as able and willing to relieve us to morrow as he is to “ day: And therefore as the *Israelites* went every day to gather “ Manna, that no day might pass without a *Memento* of God’s “ Providence, so are we directed to go to him day by day for “ our daily Bread, to make us always mindful of our dependence “ upon him.

And this we are taught to do, not for our selves only, but for all others for whom we are bound to pray, saying, in the plural Number, Give *Us*, day by day, our daily Bread.

But what need have they to ask their daily Bread, whose Barns and Bags are full, and have Goods laid up for many Years? Why, very great as well as others: For,

1. All earthly Treasures are subject to Rust and Rapine; the *Moths may corrupt them, and Thieves may break thro and steal. Trust not in uncertain Riches* (says the Apostle) *but in the living God, who giveth us all things richly to enjoy.* Beside,

2. The Rich live upon God’s Bounty as well as the Poor; ’tis he that gives them what they have, and may withdraw it from them when he pleases; and therefore ’tis but fit and reasonable that they should daily look up to him from whom all their Mercies flow.

3. All the comfort of Wealth and Riches depends intirely on God’s Blessing, without which they are all sapless and insignificant: for neither can our Food nourish, nor our Clothes warm, nor our Houses defend us without his Blessing; and therefore as all need it, so are they all to join in asking of it. By which we see in the

Last place, What it is we pray for in this Petition. When we desire God to give, we own him the Author and Donor of all our Mercies, and that we receive every thing by way of Gift at his hands.

D d d d

When

When we say *Give us*, we shew our Love to and Sympathy with the Brethren; that we tender each others Wants, and beg the Supply of them equally with our own.

When we ask for *Bread*, we pray for all the necessary and comfortable Supports of Human Life, all that is requisite to carry us thro this World, and is needful for the relief of Body and Soul.

When we ask for *daily Bread*, we seek a continual Supply of all our Necessities, which daily and hourly grow upon us, and likewise for such a Supply of them, as may sute the Condition wherein God hath placed us.

When we say, Give us *our Bread*, we ask only what we can justly come by, and lawfully call our own, without coveting what is another's.

Finally, when we say, Give us *this day, or day by day*, &c. we shew our trust in God's Providence, that we are not solicitous for to morrow, that we seek not great things, or to lay up for many Years, but are content with our daily Allowance, depending upon him from day to day, without anxiety or distrust.

Now because many things are requir'd to the producing and obtaining our daily Bread, we are to look upon them as included in this Petition. As,

1. Because we cannot have this Bread without seasonable Weather, and the kindly Influences of the Heavens, we here pray for such moderate Showers and fruitful Seasons, as may enable us to reap the Fruits of the Earth in due Season.

2. Because we cannot enjoy our daily Bread without Peace and Tranquillity, we here deprecate War, and pray for Peace, that every one may taste of his own Vine, and peaceably sit under his own Figtree.

3. Because we cannot live in Peace, nor quietly eat our own Bread without Government, we here pray for Princes and Magistrates, that *under them we may lead quiet and peaceable Lives in all Godliness and Honesty*.

4. Because, without health of Body and Mind, we can neither earn or enjoy our daily Bread, we here pray for such a measure of Health and Strength as is necessary to support Government, and to give us the taste and relish of what we possess by it.

Lastly, Because without God's Blessing all things will prove ineffectual, we here implore the Divine Blessing upon all that we have or do, that God would give us Success in our Affairs, and prosper the Work of our Hands, that the Staff of Bread may never fail us, nor we fall into Want or Poverty.

This

This, and all other things needful to the preservation and comfort of this present Life, are included and implor'd in our daily Bread. But how are we to pray for it? this must be known too, because *some ask and receive not, because they ask amiss.* And,

1. We must ask with Humility and Submission to the Divine Will, being deeply sensible both of our want and unworthiness of God's Mercy, and likewise of our inability to help our selves.

2. We must ask in Faith, or a full Assurance of being heard in what is fit for us, for *Godliness hath the Promise of the Life that now is; and he is Faithful that hath promis'd.*

3. We must ask it heartily and affectionately, as a Beggar does an Alms, who must starve and perish without it.

Lastly, We must ask it diligently, that is, our Indeavours must accompany our Petitions; we may not hope to be fed by Miracles, nor will our daily Bread drop into our Mouths without Labour: no, God hath order'd that *he that will not work, shall not eat,* and therefore we must imploy our selves in some honest Calling; and if we will have our daily Bread, we must diligently seek it. To conclude, we see where to apply our selves for Necessaries, and how our Wants may be supply'd: for God Almighty cannot hear his Children cry for Bread without giving; and if earthly Parents know how to give to their Children, how much more will our Heavenly Father give good things to them that ask them?

DISCOURSE IX.

Luke 11. 4. *And forgive us our Sins, for we also forgive them that are indebted to us.*

IN the foregoing Petition, which is the first that concerns our selves, we beg the Supply of all our Temporal Wants: the two following respect Spiritual Blessings; in which, after we have ask'd our daily Bread for the sustenance of our Bodies, we proceed to beg the Pardon of our Sins, for the Peace and Welfare of our Souls. And indeed,

Without this the former can be of no avail to us; for if our Sins are not forgiven, no earthly thing can prove a Blessing to us, our sweetest Comforts will be imbitter'd with a Curse, and
D d d d 2 the,

the fear of Divine Vengeance for all our Abundance: This is evident in the *Israelites* of old, to whom, tho God gave Quails and Manna, and fed them with Bread from Heaven, yet their murmuring and disobedience mar'd the Comfort of them, and mingled all their Blessings with a Curse; for *while the Meat was in their Mouths, the Wrath of God fell upon them, and slew the wealthiest of them*, Psal. 78. 31. 'Tis not only coarse but cursed Fare, that is attended with the Wrath of God; and the Staff of Bread will be but a slender Support when the Guilt of Sin lies heavy upon us: and therefore this Petition for Pardon is fitly join'd to that for our daily Bread, the latter receiving all its Virtue and Sweetness from the former; and as much as the Soul is to be prefer'd above the Body, so much ought our Petitions for the one to exceed our Requests for the other, since Sin poisons all our Food, and without the Pardon of it, does but fatten us for the Slaughter.

In treating therefore of this Petition, I must inquire,

First, What we understand here by *Sins*.

Secondly, What by the *forgiving of Sins*.

Thirdly, What is imply'd in asking Forgiveness of them.

Fourthly, I must speak to the Motive or Condition of it, which is the Forgiving of others.

For the *First*, All Sin (as *St. John* tells us) *is the transgressing of a Law*: And that is done, either by omitting what it requires, or committing what it forbids; the former are Sins of Omission, the latter of Commission.

Now of these Laws, some are purely Divine, given to us immediately by God himself, and relate intirely to the Worship and Duty we owe to him, the violating whereof is the sinning directly and immediately against God.

Others have the Addition of Human Authority, and relate chiefly to the Justice and Duty we owe to Men, the breaking whereof is the sinning against our Neighbour; tho these too, having the stamp of Divine as well as Human Authority, are likewise a sinning against God, and a violation of the Duty we are to pay to both. And of both these kinds of Sins we are to understand this Petition, wherein we desire God to remit our Offences against him, as we remit those that are committed against us. Now these Offences are variously express'd by the Evangelists in the Holy Gospel.

St. Matthew stiles them *ὀφειλήματα*, Debts, *Mat. 6. 12. Forgive us our Debts, as we forgive our Debtors.* We all owe unto God a Debt of Obedience, which as we are his Creatures we stand oblig'd to pay, being indebted to his Power and Goodness for all that we have. The non-payment of this Debt of Duty contracts another Debt or Obligation to Punishment, whereby we become obnoxious to his Justice, and liable to be *cast into the Prison of Hell, till we have paid the utmost Farthing.* We owe likewise to one another the Debt of Honesty and Humanity, which by the Laws of God and Nature we are requir'd to pay, by neglecting whereof we are in Debt to them, and owe them Satisfaction; so that by transgressing the Laws of God and Man, we become obnoxious to both, and stand indebted either to make Reparation, or to undergo Punishment. Again, these Offences are sometimes stil'd *παραπτώματα*, Trespasses; *Forgive us our Trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us.* By these we understand, not only the Failures of our Duty to Mankind, but the doing of Wrongs and Injuries, which increases our Guilt, and renders us more liable to Punishment.

But what St. Matthew stiles *Debts* and *Trespasses*, St. Luke here calls *ἁμαρτίας*, Sins, which amount to the same thing, being all so many Violations of the Laws of God, and the Duty we owe to Men; for every Sin makes us a Debtor to Divine and Human Justice, and every Trespass exposes us to the Censure and Punishment of both. This for the *Sins*. But,

Secondly, What is meant by *Forgiving our Sins*? This being at large explain'd in the Tenth Article of the Creed, I shall not here repeat, but refer the Reader to it.

In short, as the forgiving of a Debt is blotting out the Score, and cancelling the Bond that oblig'd to payment: And as the forgiving a Trespass, is the passing by the Wrong, without demanding farther Amends or Satisfaction; so the forgiving of Sins is the freeing a Person from the Guilt of them, and releasing the Obligation to Punishment due to them. For all Sin being an Affront to the Authority of our Maker, and a Breach of his Righteous Laws, justly incurs the Divine Vengeance, and binds the Sinner over to the Sentence of Eternal Death, this being the proper Wages and Demerit of it. Now the absolving of any from this Guilt, and taking off this Penalty, is the forgiving of it. And as a Malefactor lying under the Sentence of Death, is said to be pardon'd,

pardon'd, when the Execution is not only respited, but the Sentence of Death revok'd: even so the Sinner is said to be forgiven, when he is releas'd from the just Punishment threatned and denounc'd against him; which is too plain to need any farther Explication.

But, *Thirdly*, what is imply'd in asking Forgiveness of Sin?

1. Here is imply'd a deep and serious sense of our Sins, together with the Guilt and Hainousness of them; for he who asks Pardon, owns a Fault, and is sensible of his need of it: This is a fit Qualification of a Supplicant, and disposes him to receive Mercy, which is ever most readily bestow'd on those that are most sensible of the want of it; whereas they that feel not the lack of it, will never seek or find it. And therefore we are here taught to address unto God, with a humble sense of our manifold Infirmities and Miscarriages; not like the proud Pharisee, boasting of his own Righteousness, *and thanking God that we are better than other Men*; but with the poor Publican, *smiting on the Breast*, and saying, *Lord be merciful to me a Sinner*. This is here suppos'd; for the begging Forgiveness, is both owning the Guilt, and craving of Mercy.

2. Here is imply'd, not only the inward Sense, but the outward Confession and Acknowledgment of our Sins; this is farther requisite to the obtaining Mercy, for we can neither ask nor hope for Pardon, without confessing our Faults: *He that covereth his Sin* (says the Wise Man) *shall not prosper; but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall find Mercy*. And St. John to the same purpose: *If we say we have no Sin, we deceive our selves, and the Truth is not in us; but if we confess our Sins, he is faithful and just to forgive them*, 1 John 1. 8, 9. We put a cheat upon our selves, to look for Pardon without Confession; and therefore this must be evermore suppos'd in our Petition for it.

3. The asking for Pardon, implies the sense of our Inability to obtain it of our selves; for none will ask that of another, which he can do for himself. Indeed, the least Sin has too much Guilt for us to expiate or remove, 'tis a Debt we can never satisfy for our selves, and an Affront for which we can never make sufficient Amends, and therefore seek it elsewhere: this is imply'd in this Petition for Mercy; and our seeking Forgiveness, supposes us to be lost and undone without it.

4. Here is imply'd our Trust in God, and Faith in the Merits of a Redeemer. To ask Forgiveness at God's Hands, supposes him both able and willing to give it; and because an Atonement was necessary to that end, and Divine Justice requir'd Satisfaction, our begging of it supposes a Satisfaction made, and our reliance upon the Merits and Virtue of it. To hope for Mercy without this were Presumption and Vanity; and to ask for Pardon without a Satisfaction, would be to ask Impossibilities, and to set the Mercy of God at variance with his Justice. Now because *without shedding of Blood there is no Remission*; and the Blood of Bulls and Goats, or any other Creature, was not of Value sufficient for this Expiation: our belief of a Satisfaction supposes the Sacrifice of Christ, whose Blood alone cleanses us from all Sin; and our asking Forgiveness, implies a Faith in his Blood, from whence all our Mercies flow.

Thus we see the Sense of this Petition, and what is imply'd in it. But how are we to ask this *Forgiveness*? Why,

1. This must be done with Self-abasement, and a deep sense of our own Unworthiness; not claiming it upon any desert of ours, but wholly casting our selves upon the Merits and Satisfaction of our Surety; thankfully owning the Wisdom of God in contriving, and his Goodness in accepting this Method of Reconciliation.

2. We must ask it heartily, and with the same earnestness that a condemn'd Malefactor seeks and sues for a Pardon: And seeking the good Things of this Life, we are to moderate our Desires, and refer all to the Divine Will; but in asking for Mercy and Pardon, we cannot be too importunate. Here we are allow'd to wrestle with God, and to take no denial, being utterly lost and undone for ever without it.

3. We must ask Forgiveness with penitent Hearts, and Resolutions to return no more to Folly; for 'tis the *Confessing and forsaking of Sin*, that hath the Promise of *finding Mercy*. Without this we do but *mock God*, and ask leave farther to provoke him: To Sin and Confess, and to Confess and Sin again, is to act in a Circle, that will involve us in endless Misery; and he justly forfeits all title to a Pardon, that returns again to the same Enormities: and therefore all Petitions for Pardon must be ever attended with Contrition and Amendment.

Lastly,

Lastly, To obtain the Forgiveness of our Sins, we must ask it with Hearts ready and willing to forgive others: And this will lead me in the next place to

Consider the Motive or Condition annext to this Petition, in which we pray to God to *forgive us our Trespases, as we forgive them that trespass against us*.

By Trespases here we see are meant in general, all the Violations of Divine and Human Laws. Those which more immediately cross the Duty we owe to our Maker, are stil'd Trespases against God; those which are more directly level'd against our Neighbour, are said to be Trespases against us: infomuch that when we neglect the Worship, or profane the Name of God, we commit a Trespass against him; when any Hurt is done to our Person, Goods or Name, they are said to trespass against us. Now these latter Offences committed against us, must be remitted by us, if we expect Remission of the former, which we have committed against God; for our Saviour here teaches to pray God to *forgive us our Trespases, as we forgive others*. This is frequently inculcated upon us elsewhere; *Forgive, and ye shall be forgiven*, Luke 6. 37. And if ye forgive not Men their Trespases, neither will your Heavenly Father forgive yours, Mat. 6. 15.

But must we put up all Wrongs done to us without seeking Satisfaction, upon pain of forfeiting all Favour and Forgiveness at God's Hands?

No, there are some slight Trespases that do us little or no harm; these Christian Charity, which *suffereth long*, wills us to pass by without seeking Revenge or Reparation. But where the Damage or Danger is greater, where Men by having a few lesser Wrongs remitted, are embolden'd to commit more and greater, there a legal Satisfaction may well enough be sought to repair past and prevent future Injuries: And yet here too, where the Trespases are involuntary, where the Wrong done is repented of and amended; and where no greater Satisfaction can be had, there we are requir'd frankly to forgive them.

This is our Case in respect to our Offences against God, to whom we have run on score beyond all possible Satisfaction; and if we expect that God should *forgive us our Debts*, we must *forgive them that are indebted to us*, without which we can pretend no title to Favour; for 'tis upon these Terms only that we are here taught to ask it, desiring God to forgive us as we forgive others. We

read

read in the Gospel, that he who *took his fellow Servant by the Throat for forty Pence*, when his Master had just before forgiven him *a thousand Talents*, was cast into Prison, and doom'd to stay there till he should pay the utmost Farthing; even so (says our Saviour) *will your Heavenly Father do with you, if ye forgive not one another their Trespases.*

In short then, we see the Condition of our Pardon, together with the manner of asking it; which must be with Hearts full of Charity, and readiness to forgive others: for God expects that we should be so dispos'd towards our Brethren, as we desire him to be towards us; which is no more than what the Golden Rule of Equity, of *doing as we would be done by*, requires from us. And therefore we are bid to be reconcil'd to our Brother before we offer our Gift for a Reconciliation with God, emptying our Hearts of all Malice, Grudges and Prejudices against any, that we may *lift up holy hands without wrath and doubting*: 'Tis this way we beg it, and if we do not or will not forgive others, we put a Bar to our own Requests, and shut our selves out of all Plea for Pardon.

To conclude all, Let us frequently and fervently put up this Petition for Mercy and Pardon, considering not only the Excellence of this Benefit, but the absolute necessity we stand in of it: For as *blest and thrice happy are they whose Iniquities are forgiven, and whose Sin is cover'd*; so miserable and undone for ever are all they whose Transgressions remain on the Score, and are left to be reckon'd for at the last Day.

DISCOURSE X.

Luke 11. 4. *And lead us not into Temptation, but deliver us from Evil.*

HAVING in the preceding Petition pray'd for the Pardon of all our past Sins, we are directed in this last to pray for Grace to prevent all future Transgressions: And because there are many Baits and Snares laid for us by the Devil, the World and the Flesh, the three grand Enemies of our Soul, we are taught to say, *Lead us not into Temptation, but deliver us from Evil.* 'Twill be in vain to hope for Pardon without Amend-
E e e e
ment;

ment; and because there are many things that may obstruct both, we are to watch and pray, that we be not inveigled or betray'd by them.

And here from our Saviour's prescribing two Petitions for our Soul, and but one for our Body, we may observe that our Care for the one should be double to our Concern for the other; and for good reason too, the Soul being that noble and immortal part of us that will live for ever, and the Body only a frail perishing Substance which will shortly moulder into Dust.

Now this Petition for the Safety and Welfare of our Souls, consists of two parts; the

One more general, to be preserv'd from all Temptations.

The other more particular, to be deliver'd from the Evil one, and all the Miseries that proceed from his Temptations.

I begin with the First, in which we pray to be preserv'd from all Temptations, in those words, *And lead us not into Temptation*; where it will be requisite to explain,

First, What is here meant by *Temptation*.

Secondly, How God may be said to *lead us in or out of Temptation*.

Thirdly, What we pray for, when we desire him *not to lead us into Temptation*. For the

First, Temptation in the general sense signifies any kind of Trial or Probation of any Person. 'Tis sometimes taken in a good sense, for the trial of a man's Vertue or Constancy; and that is done either by some difficult Act of Obedience, so God tempted *Abraham* by bidding him to sacrifice his Son, *Gen. 22. 1.* or by some great Suffering and Affliction, so he tried the Patience of *Job*, call'd by *St. Peter* the fiery Trial: both which are in Scripture stil'd Temptations, because by them the Temper, Dispositions, and Intentions of Men are discover'd, and their Vertues exercis'd and improv'd.

Sometimes again Temptation is taken in a bad sense, for the enticing or drawing Men into Sin. And this is done either by way of Terror and Affrightment; so Troubles and Persecutions are call'd *Temptations*, because by them many are drawn and discourag'd from their Duty: or else by way of Allurement and Sollicitation to Evil; so Satan is stil'd *the Tempter*, and the Profits, Pleasures, and Honors of the World are call'd *Temptations*, because by them many are ensnar'd and drawn aside to their own Destruction.

on. Now 'tis in this last and worse sense, that we are here and generally elsewhere to understand Temptation, viz. for an Allurement unto Sin, a Stumbling-block, a Snare, or an Occasion of falling into Evil: In which sense St. Paul tells us, that *they who will be rich, fall into Temptation and a Snare, and into many sinful and hurtful Lusts, which drown them in Destruction and Perdition,* 1 Tim. 6. 9. This for Temptation. But,

Secondly, How is God said to lead us in or out of Temptation?

In answer to which I say,

1. If we take Temptations for Trials and Afflictions, so God is said to lead us into Temptation, when he lays any Trouble or Calamity upon us himself, or permits it to be done by others. Thus he is said to tempt *Job*, by laying his own hand heavy upon him, and suffering the *Chaldeans* and *Sabeans* to despoil him of all his Goods. And thus he frequently tries the Patience of his own People in the Furnace of Affliction, by which he designs to purge out their Dross, and refine them as Gold purify'd in the Fire. And as he is said to lead us into Temptation, when he lays any Trouble or Calamity upon us, so does he lead us out of it, when he takes off his Hand, and removes the Affliction from us; which is the sense of the Apostle in those words: *There hath no Temptation taken you, but such as is common to Men; but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able, but will with the Temptation make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it,* 1 Cor. 10. 13. But,

2. If we take Temptation (as it commonly is) for an Enticement or Sollicitation to Evil, so God cannot be properly said to lead any into Temptation; for that would make him the Author of Sin, and shew him to be the Encourager of that, of which he hath declar'd himself the Avenger, which would be Blasphemy to affirm or imagine: And therefore St. James cautions us, *Let no Man say, when he is tempted, I am tempted of God, for God cannot be tempted with Evil, neither tempteth he any man,* James 1. 13.

But tho God cannot in any direct, proper, or persuasive way tempt any to Sin, yet he may be said sometimes indirectly and accidentally to lead us into Temptation. As,

1. When in the Course of his Providence he propounds those Objects, and affords those Opportunities, that excite our Corruptions, and prove to us an Occasion of falling. Thus Wealth, Honor, Beauty, Power, and the like, tho in themselves not only

harmless, but useful things, do yet many times administer to Pride, Luxury, Lust, and Oppression, and become the accidental Causes of much Evil. *Achan* was tempted by the glittering of the *Wedg of Gold*: *David* was ensnar'd by the Beauty of *Bathsheba*: And *Solomon* tells us of *Riches* given sometimes to the Owners thereof to their hurt. Not that they are so design'd by God who gives them, but that Mens corrupt Natures too often take occasion to abuse and pervert the Blessings of Heaven to their own Destruction, and so turn the Instruments of Good into the Occasions of Evil. And therefore we find *Agar* praying against *Riches*, lest being full he should be tempted to deny God, and say who is the Lord? and likewise against *Poverty*, lest being empty, he should be tempted to steal, and take the Name of God in vain: which is in effect not to be led into Temptation by either.

2. God is said to lead into Temptation, by permitting the Devil to tempt us: Thus he let loose Satan upon *Job*, who tempted him to Impatience and Cursing of God; yea, we read that Christ himself was led by the Spirit of God to be tempted by the Devil, Mat. 4. 1. Our Saviour told St. Peter, that Satan had desir'd him, that he might sift him as Wheat, Luke 22. 31. but he had pray'd for him, that his Faith should not fail, nor himself be foil'd by him. Tho the evil Spirits are all under the Command of God, and can have no power over us but what is given from above, yet they sometimes obtain leave to tempt us, for the Exercise of our Graces, and the Trial of our Constancy; yea, sometimes God Almighty not only permits, but gives them a Commission to this purpose: Thus the evil Spirit was bid to go and persuade Ahab to go up and fall at Ramoth-Gilead, 1 Kings 22. 20, 21, 22. And the Lord is said to move David against Israel, to go and number the People, 2 Sam. 24. 1. tho this is elsewhere ascrib'd to the Solicitation of Satan, 1 Chron. 21. 1. And thus God may be said to lead every one into Temptation, whom he suffers to be tempted.

Lastly, God is said to lead us into Temptation, by withholding his Grace from us, and leaving us under the power of Temptation: Thus he is said to have left Hezekiah, to try what was in his Heart, 2 Chron. 32. 31. And the Psalmist tells us of the *Israelites*, that when they refus'd to hearken to the Voice of the Lord, God gave them up to their own Heart's Lust, and to walk in their own Counsel, which led them on headlong to their own Destruction, Psal. 81. 12.

These

These are the chief, if not the only ways, whereby God is said to lead us into Temptation: By which we learn,

Thirdly, What we pray for, when we say, *Lead us not into Temptation*; by which we are not directed to pray simply and absolutely against all Trials by Affliction and Adversity, which are sometimes of greater Use and Benefit to us than Plenty and Prosperity: for tho' *no Affliction for the present be joyous but grievous, nevertheless they oftentimes yield the peaceable Fruits of Righteousness to them that are exercis'd therewith: and these light Afflictions, which are but for a moment, work out for us a more exceeding and eternal weight of Glory.* For which reason we are bid not so much to pray against, as to prepare for them, to arm our selves against they come, and to make a right use of them, when it shall please God to send them: yea, St. James wills us to count it all Joy, when we fall into divers Temptations, knowing that the Trial of our Faith worketh Patience, and that these things redound not only to our own Good, but to the Praise and Glory of God.

But that which we are here taught to pray against, is in general against all the Enticements and Allurements to Sin, which is the Bane of our Peace, and the Ruin both of Body and Soul. More particularly we pray,

1. To be preserv'd from all the Inveiglements of sensible Objects, and from all the Occasions and Opportunities inviting to any Evil, as from the Influence of bad Counsel, evil Company, wicked Customs, and bad Examples; from all danger from the Frowns or Flatteries of the World, that we be neither discourag'd by the one, nor betray'd by the other: But that God in his Providence would so order things, that we may not be endanger'd by them; and chiefly that he would keep us from those Objects and Opportunities, that are apt to excite or work upon our Corruptions, and prove to us an Occasion of falling.

2. We pray that God would not withdraw from us the Assistance of his Grace, or leave us to follow our own Heart's Lust, which is one of the sorest Judgments that can betide us; for we are naturally feeble and impotent Creatures, unable of our selves to guide our steps aright, and likewise too prone and willing to be misled: *Our Hearts are deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked*; our Lusts make a Party against our selves, and are ever ready to betray us: so that if God withhold the Assistance of his Grace, we are in a helpless and dangerous Condition, and to be left

left to our selves must be a dismal Calamity: and therefore we are taught to pray that God would not take away his Holy Spirit from us, nor leave us to the unsafe Conduct of our own Spirit, which will not only lead us into Temptation, but give all the Venom and Advantage to it; for then are we most dangerously tempted, when we are drawn away of our own Hearts Lust and entic'd, James 1. 14.

Lastly we pray, that God would not permit Satan or any evil Spirit to tempt us; that he would not slacken the Chain in which they are held, nor let them loose upon us; but that he will so bridle and restrain their Fury, that either they may not be able to assault us, or that we may be kept from being foil'd or endanger'd by them. In a word, we pray here that we may neither enter into Temptation our selves, nor be led into it by any other. And this will lead me to consider the

2d Branch of this Petition, in those words, *But deliver us from Evil*; which is not a distinct Petition, but only an Illustration and Enforcement of the former. In the Original it is ἀπο τοῦ πονηροῦ, from the Evil one, which St. Chrysostom interprets of the Devil, who is frequently stil'd the Tempter, that seduceth us into Evil; from whose Wiles and Devices we pray to be deliver'd, that Satan may have no power over us, nor possession of us, but that we may escape the fiery Darts of that wicked one, or be kept from being hurt or wounded by them.

Tertullian understands it more largely of all Evil of Sin, from whose Power and Dominion we pray to be deliver'd, that no Sin or Wickedness whatsoever may foreign in our mortal Bodies, as to make us obey it in the Lusts thereof.

But both these being included in the former Clause, to avoid Repetition, which may not well be suppos'd in this short Form, 'twill be requisite to add a farther Sense of these words; and that is to understand by *Evil* here in the Close, all the bad Effects of Sin, or the Evil of Punishment, from which we likewise pray to be deliver'd. For having before ask'd to be preserv'd from the Commission of Sin, and all the Temptations leading thereunto, we here farther pray to be preserv'd from the sad Effects and Consequents of it, and that we may be safe from all Evils, Temporal, Spiritual, and Eternal.

As for Temporal Evils, as Afflictions, Sickness, Losses, and Disappointments in worldly Affairs, evil Reports, Reproaches, and the Contradiction of Sinners, with other such earthly Calamities; these

these we are to deprecate as our Saviour did the bitter Cup, with Submission to the Divine Will, saying as he in the like case did, *Father, if it be possible, let these things pass from us.* Nevertheless, because these may be sometimes necessary, and tend to our greater good, we are to add with him, *Not my Will, but thine be done.*

As for Spiritual Evils, such as Blindness of Mind, Hardness of Heart, a wounded Conscience, the want of Love, Fear, and Reverence towards God; of Good-will and Charity to our Neighbour; of Sobriety, Temperance, and Chastity towards our selves; with such-like spiritual Maladies: these being in themselves evil, and such as can no way tend or be turn'd to any good, we are to pray absolutely against them, and heartily desire to be freed and deliver'd from them.

As for Eternal Evils, such as the Wrath of God, the Worm that never dies, and the Fire that never goeth out, the unpardonable Sin, the Horrors of Despair, and the Torments of the Damned, with all the other doleful Consequents of final Impenitence; these we are most earnestly to pray against, and never to give God Almighty or our selves any rest, without some hopes of being deliver'd from them.

But because our most earnest and affectionate Prayers against these Evils, will find no Answer or Acceptance without using the proper and prescrib'd means to that end, we must be ever mindful to add our best Endeavours to all our Petitions, to render them successful, using our utmost Care and Caution in these matters; which we should the rather do, because our Enemies are many and mighty, vigilant, potent, and politick, *seeking whom they may devour.* In a word, Because the World hath many Baits and Snares to intrap us; because Satan hath many Wiles and Stratagems to circumvent us, and our own corrupt and deceitful Hearts are too apt to join issue with those ghostly Enemies, and to betray us into their hands; we are always to *watch and pray, that we enter not into Temptation.*

And because the Evil and Danger of these things are unspeakably great both in this and the next World, we are not only to pray, *not to be led into Temptation,* but to be deliver'd from the Evils of it.

Thus I have finish'd the Preface and Petitions of this Divine Prayer; there remains the Doxology and Close of all, which shall be handled in the next.

DISCOURSE XI.

Mat. 6. 13. *For thine is the Kingdom, and the Power, and the Glory, for ever and ever. Amen.*

THESE Words contain the Doxology or Conclusion of the Lord's Prayer, which by the Particle *For*, that ushers them in, seem to be added as a Reason for our putting up the foregoing Petitions, and as a Ground of Hope and Confidence of obtaining them. I shall not here nicely enquire why this Doxology is omitted by St. *Luke*, as it is likewise in many *Latin* and *Greek* Copies, which follow'd that Evangelist; 'tis sufficient for us that 'tis mention'd by St. *Matthew*, and prescrib'd by our Saviour in his Sermon on the Mount: and our Church has wisely enough comply'd with both, in prescribing it to be us'd sometimes with and sometimes without it. But because Prayer cannot be compleat without Praises, we are directed still to use it in our daily and ordinary Devotions; it being very unfit to ask of God the Supply of all our Wants, without returning him the Praises and Acknowledgments due for all his Blessings. And therefore our Blessed Saviour, who taught us to begin our Petitions with the Glory of God, that his *Name may be hallow'd, his Kingdom come, and his Will be done by all the Inhabitants of the Earth*; has likewise will'd us to close up all with an Acknowledgment of *his Kingdom, Power, and Glory*: thereby signifying, that his Glory is to be the Beginning and End of all our Actions; and likewise directing us to ascribe that Honor and Glory to him our selves, which we pray may be given him by all others.

Praising God being then a necessary Part of Prayer, 'twill be requisite to know wherein it consists; and that we are here told is in an humble Acknowledgment and Adoration of the Divine Attributes and Perfections, whereby we are encourag'd not only to pray to him, but to look for a gracious Answer and Accomplishment of our Petitions. This is the Sense and Drift of these words, *For thine is the Kingdom, the Power, and the Glory for ever and ever; Amen.* Where every Word adds Strength to our Faith, and is a firm Prop of our Hope and Confidence in him; as will evidently appear in the handling of them.

And

And 1. we are here taught to praise God by owning his Kingdom; *For thine is the Kingdom.* By this we are to understand that universal Empire and Dominion, which God hath over all his Creatures, whereby he orders and disposes all things according to the Counsel of his own Will; and more particularly, that spiritual and peculiar Kingdom and Authority which he exerciseth over his Church and People, guiding them by *his Counsel here*, and hereafter *bringing them to Glory*. Both these Kingdoms we find the Psalmist frequently acknowledging to be his; *Thou hast prepar'd thy Throne in the Heavens, and thy Kingdom ruleth over all, Psal. 103. 19.* And elsewhere, *The Lord is King, be the People never so impatient; he sitteth between the Cherubims, be the Earth never so unquiet.* To this Kingdom all the Princes and Potentates of the Earth owe Subjection, who must lay down their Crowns at his Call, and resign their Kingdoms to him that gave them. Of his Kingdom of Grace, whereby he reigns in the Hearts of his People, we find frequent mention in Holy Scripture.

Now this affords a firm Foundation for our Faith, and may secure to us the Success of our Petitions; for if God be King, we may be sure he will take care of and provide for his People: and as we are to pay Subjection to him, so may we expect Protection from him. When we are bid to pray that God's Kingdom may come, we may rest assur'd that so it will; for the Kingdom being his, he will not fail to exalt and enlarge it. Neither may we doubt of receiving from him all that is needful for our selves; for he hath not only the Bowels of a Father, but the Mercy and Clemency of a gracious King; and if we tread his Courts and attend his Throne, he is ready to receive and grant our Requests: and being persuaded of this, we address to him as the great King of Heaven and Earth, and say, *Thine is the Kingdom.*

2. We are here directed to praise God, by ascribing to him all Power and Strength; *For thine is the Power.* By this we are to understand his All-sufficient, Infinite, and Almighty Power, whereby he is able to do all things, and nothing can resist his Will. This is another Reason and farther Encouragement to hope for the Success of our Petitions, because we address to him, who *bath all Power both in Heaven and Earth, and can do whatever pleaseth him.* Indeed, were our Prayers directed to deaf and dumb Idols, those impotent Deities of the Heathens, that can neither hear nor help, we might well enough be discourag'd from bringing any more such vain Oblations, and might soon grow weary of such a boot-

less and unprofitable Devotion ; but since we pray to the omnipotent Creator and Disposer of all things, who is able to hear and answer our Petitions, yea who can do more than we are able to ask or think, we may address with Confidence to so able and willing a Benefactor : for he being the Fountain of all Grace and Strength, we may safely rely upon him for the Relief of all our Wants, and come to him for all that is necessary for this Lite or a better, backing our Requests for both with this comfortable Motive, *For thine is the Power.*

3. We are here taught to praise God, by ascribing all Glory to him ; *For thine is the Kingdom, the Power, and the Glory.* By this we acknowledg all Honor and Reverence, all Love and Thankfulness to be due to God only ; and consequently, that we may not assume any part of his Glory to our selves, but must render it all intirely to him. God hath declar'd himself to be very tender and jealous of his Honor, and that he *will not give his Glory to another.* Herod, for taking to himself the Honor that was due to God only, was *eaten up of Worms* ; his Arrogance was chastis'd by those contemptible Creatures, and he who aspir'd to be a God, became a Prey to the very Worms : which shews us the Danger of robbing God of that Honor which he claims as his, and expects to be paid to him.

But as we forfeit the Favor, and incur the Frowns of Heaven by robbing God of the Honor of his Mercies, so do we engage his Goodness still to help us, by rendring to him the Glory of them : And therefore our Saviour, to add Force and Efficacy to our Petitions, hath will'd us to say in the Close of them, *For thine is the Glory* ; whereby presenting our Necessities before him, we implore the Influences of his Grace, that we may the better shew forth his Glory. By this he hath taught us to acknowledg our own Vileness, that we can neither do or deserve any thing of our selves ; as also to magnify and adore the infinite Greatness of God, who is able at all times to relieve and succour us : therefore willing us to say with the Angels in the Revelations, *Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive Honor, and Praise, and Glory* ; and with the Psalmist, *Not unto us, but unto thy Name be all the Glory.* Which Confessions give a mighty Efficacy to our Prayers, and contribute very much to the desir'd Issue and Success of them.

4. Here is added a farther Encouragement from the Eternity of these Divine Perfections ; *For thine is the Kingdom, the Power,*
† and

and the Glory for ever and ever. His Kingdom is not like that of earthly Monarchs, short, movable, and uncertain; but *the Lord remaineth a King for ever, and his Dominion endureth throughout all Ages: Thy Throne, O God, is for ever and ever, and thy Kingdom is an everlasting Kingdom.* Again,

His Power is not like ours, deriv'd, limited, and depending upon another, but from himself, infinite, independent, and indefectible. Our Strength often fails us, and the greatest Abilities decay, insomuch that we may be helpful to day, and helpless to morrow; but *God is the same yesterday, to day, and for ever, and with him is no Variableness, neither shadow of Change.* Moreover,

His Glory is not like that of the World, fading and transitory, that glisters for a while, and then vanishes away; but permanent, immutable and eternal in the Heavens: nothing can fully or eclipse his Glory, which is above the reach of Envy or Detraction, and shines for ever with a bright and never-fading Lustre; even *so thine is the Kingdom, the Power, and the Glory for ever and ever.*

All these are so many powerful Motives to lead us to him, and firm Foundations of Hope and Confidence in him.

He is a King for ever, and therefore will be sure always to provide for and protect his loving Subjects.

His Power is everlasting, and therefore will be ever able as well as willing to help and defend them.

His Glory is for ever and ever, and therefore the cherishing Influences of it can never fail his People, but will shine out upon them to all Eternity.

And now what may we not expect from so powerful and glorious a King? What can be too hard for Omnipotence to effect for us? or what too great for infinite Bounty to bestow? These are the Encouragements our Saviour here adds to our Petitions, which may serve as so many Props to our Faith, and the Pillars of our Hope and Confidence in God. And what greater Motives can we have to draw nigh to him, and to make our Requests known to so gracious and glorious a Majesty, who is so able and willing to help us? Wherefore to draw to a Conclusion, we may learn from hence at all times to address unto God *with full Assurance of Faith, lifting up holy Hands without Wrath and Doubting; so shall we find Mercy and Grace to help in time of need.*

Thus I have with all possible Plainness and Brevity gone thro the several Parts and Petitions of the Lord's Prayer; which begins with *Our Father*, to teach us to come to him with the Bold-

ness of Children, and ends with *Thine is the Kingdom, the Power, and the Glory*, to encourage us to address with the Confidence of Subjects ; and both will us to rely upon his Ability and Readiness to relieve us in all our Exigences.

There remains only the concluding Particle *Amen*, which being directed to be added to this, and all our other Prayers compos'd by it, must be a little briefly explain'd. To which end we may observe,

1. That this Word is us'd sometimes as a Note of Attention, and then 'tis prefix'd before a Speech, and signifies the great weight and importance of what comes after it. In this sense 'tis the same with *Verily, Verily*, which we find often us'd in Scripture to usher in matters of great moment and necessity. Thus we find it frequently us'd by our Blessed Saviour, as *John* 3. 5. to convince *Nicodemus* of the Necessity of Baptism, and *John* 16. 23. to assure the Disciples of the Success of their Petitions ; where *Verily, Verily*, in both places is the same with *Amen, Amen* ; which is a vehement Assertion of the Truth and Certainty of what he spake, and that 'tis to be believ'd and receiv'd accordingly. Again,

2. This Term is sometimes us'd as a Note of Assent, and then 'tis affix'd to what went before, signifying our owning and assenting to it, and so *Amen* is the same with *so it is*, or *so it shall be*. In this sense 'tis added to this and all our other Prayers, to denote our hearty Assent to and Belief of them, that they are offer'd up in Truth and Sincerity, and that we expect a comfortable Issue and Return of them. The Apostle speaks of some Prayers, to which *they that occupy the room of the Unlearned cannot say Amen*, as when they are deliver'd in an unknown Tongue, as also when the Matter of them is unsound, and the Expressions uncertain and obscure ; for which reason we are directed to pray with the Understanding, and that our Words should be few and well-weigh'd, that all the People may *say Amen to our giving of thanks*.

3. This Term is sometimes us'd as a Note of Consent, and signifies the Harmony and Agreement of the Petitioners, that they unite in their Requests, and join together in what they ask, saying with one Voice *Amen*, that *so it may be*: This is what the Apostle means, when he wills all Christians to *speak the same thing*, and *with one Mind and one Mouth to glorify God*. This is imply'd in the Use of this word here, and in our other Prayers, where 'tis order'd that *Amen* be said not by one or two only, but

jointly by all the People, and particularly by every Member of the Congregation, to signify the Harmony and Agreement of their Devotion, which is to serve God *in the Beauty of Holiness*, even with one Heart and one Consent. And this will give the greater Strength and Efficacy to our Prayers; for if God hath promis'd to hear the Petitions of two or three meeting and agreeing together in his Name, how much more will he lend an ear to the joint Devotions of a pious Multitude, all agreeing and saying *Amen* to the same Petitions?

4. This Term is sometimes us'd as a Note of Intention, and betokens not only the Harmony, but the Ardency and Intensity of our Devotion; and so *Amen* is the same with *So be it*, or so we earnestly wish and pray *it may be*. In this sense likewise 'tis here understood, and hath a particular reference to each Petition, signifying the Zeal and Fervency of our Requests, that we are touch'd with a true Sense and an earnest Desire of what we ask. In our Petitions for God's Glory, it denotes our earnest Desire of promoting it, saying with the Psalmist, *Let the whole Earth be fill'd with his Glory, Amen and Amen*, Psal. 72. 19. In our Petitions for our selves, it bespeaks the deep Sense we have of our Wants, and our hearty Longings to have them supply'd; and in both saying with the Psalmist, *Blessed be the Lord God of Israel from everlasting to everlasting, and let all the People say Amen*, Psal. 106. 48. And this was done with that Zeal and Fervency by the primitive Christians, that the founding forth their *Amens* was (as St. Jerom tells us) like the Voice of Thunder, or the Sound of many Waters; and 'twere well if our *Amens* were more audible and unanimous, to shew that we heartily conspire together in our Requests, and are duly affected with what we ask. They that withhold their *Amen* to the Prayers of the Church, or whisper it out too softly, betray a great Coldness and Unconcernedness in the Devotion, and deserve to have no share in the Benefit of it.

5. This Term is sometimes us'd as a Note of Assurance, and signifies the comfortable Hope of the Return of our Prayers: In this sense *Amen* is the same with *So it will be*, by pronouncing whereof we express our Faith in God, and a good Assurance of being heard in what is ask'd. *Amen* in the Hebrew signifies Truth and Faithfulness; and when we use it in our Prayers, it implies that we take God to be faithful, and that we rely upon him for the fulfilling his Promise in the Answer of our Prayers: hence *all the Promises are said to be in him Yea, and in him Amen*, 2 Cor. 1. 20. meaning

meaning that they are all undoubtedly true, and may be firmly rely'd upon. Yea, we find God stiling himself, *The Amen, the faithful and true Witness*, Rev. 3. 14. And the closing our Prayers with it, shews that we take him for such, and depend upon him accordingly.

Lastly, This Term is us'd as a Note of Conclusion, and signifies the shutting up of our Requests, or the putting a period to our Prayers. Hence St. Jerom calls it *Signaculum Orationis*, the Seal of Prayer, because it at once confirms and concludes it, as a Seal assures and ends a Bargain. This Seal our Saviour here sets to his own Prayer, and hath directed us to do so to all others, shutting them up with this concluding Particle, *Amen*; to signify not only our unfeigned Assent to and Consent in all our Petitions, but likewise our stedfast Faith and Reliance upon God for the performance of them, for *he is faithful that hath promis'd*.

Thus I have given you the full Sense and Scope of this Term, *Amen*; which you see is a very pregnant Word, and contains in it many useful Lessons.

And so I have done with the Exposition of this Divine Form; which being so compleat and comprehensive of all that is fit and needful for us to ask, ought to be the Standard and Model of all our Devotion; in which we must always add this perfect Prayer to our imperfect Petitions, to cover the Defects and procure the Acceptance of them, that asking in Christ's Words, as well as in Christ's Name, we may be the sooner heard for his Merits: And this we should not fail to do, since our Blessed Saviour has left it in charge with us, and commanded us when we pray, to say, *Our Father, which art in Heaven, &c.* Which excellent Form beginning and ending with God's Glory, teaches us in all our Addresses to do likewise: And therefore to God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, be all Glory, Honor, Praise, Might, Majesty, and Dominion, now and for evermore. *Amen.*

DISCOURSE XII.

Phil. 4. 6. *latter part, In every thing by Prayer and Supplication, with Thanksgiving, let your Requests be made known unto God.*

THE next Question in the Catechism following the Lord's Prayer, is, *What desirest thou of God in this Prayer?* To which the Answer is, *I desire my Lord God, our heavenly Father, who is the Giver of all Goodness, to send his Grace unto me and all People, that I may worship him, serve him, and obey him, as I ought to do. And I pray unto God, that he will send us all things needful to our Souls and Bodies; and that he will be merciful unto us, and forgive us our Sins: and that it will please him to save and defend us in all Dangers ghostly and bodily; and that he will keep us from all Sin and Wickedness, and from our ghostly Enemy, and from everlasting Death. And this I trust he will do of his Mercy and Goodness; and therefore I say Amen, so be it.* In which Question and Answer, we have a brief Summary of all things contain'd in the Lord's Prayer; of which I shall treat from these words: *In every thing by Prayer and Supplication, with Thanksgiving, let your Requests be made known unto God.* Where we may observe,

First, The Object to whom our Prayers are to be directed, and that is, to God, saith our Text; to the Lord God our heavenly Father, who is the Giver of all Goodness, saith the Catechism.

Secondly, The Matter of our Prayers, and that is, *Every thing*, saith the Text, which are more particularly enumerated and reckon'd up in the Catechism; as we shall see after.

Thirdly, Our Thankfulness, and Trust in God for the performance of them: *And this I trust, &c.* Of each of these something briefly and distinctly. And I begin,

First, with the Object to whom our Prayers and Supplications are to be directed; and that is *unto God*, whom the Psalmist stiles, *A God hearing Prayers, and therefore to him must all Flesh come*, Psal. 2. 65. The Catechism expresses him by the Lord God, our heavenly Father, who is the Giver of all Goodness. Where he is call'd the Lord God, to signify his Sovereignty and Authority over us: Our heavenly Father, to signify his Ability and Readiness to help

us, which are far above that of earthly Parents to their Children: *The Giver of all Goodness*, Jam. 1. 5, 17. to encourage us in all our Addresses to him, and to expect from him all that we can reasonably desire. From the Object, I proceed,

Secondly, To the subject Matter of our Prayers and Supplications; and that our Text tells us, is *Every thing* that is necessary or fit for us to ask, or for him to give. Which the Catechism from the Lord's Prayer branches out in several Particulars: As,

1. *That he would send his Grace unto us, and to all People, that we may worship him, serve him, and obey him, as we ought to do.* Whereby his Grace we are to understand that supernatural Aid and Strength he is pleas'd to promise and superadd to our weak Endeavours to please him. Which *Grace of his* we pray him to send not to us only, but to all People; whereby we are taught not to confine our Prayers to our selves, but to extend them to all our Christian Brethren; which Lesson we learn from the Preface to the Lord's Prayer. And this Grace we pray him to send,

(1.) *That we may worship him*, that is, that we may celebrate the Glory of his adorable Attributes and Perfections, always thinking and speaking honorably of his Holy Name, and having a due Esteem and Veneration for all Persons and Things that are call'd by it: and this is imply'd in the first Petition, *Hallowed be thy Name.*

(2.) *That we may serve him*; that is, that we may own him for our Lord and King, and may accordingly pay him the Homage and Service due to so great a Majesty; that so being Subjects of his Kingdom of Grace here, we may be prepar'd to be the Subjects of his Kingdom of Glory hereafter. And this is imply'd in the second Petition, *Thy Kingdom come.*

Lastly, *That we may obey him, as we ought to do*; that is, that we may cheerfully perform his Will, and live in a constant Observance of his Laws; and all this in such a manner *as we ought*, that is, in a way suitable to his Nature, and agreeable to his Will, still setting before us the Pattern of the holy Angels in Heaven, and endeavouring as near as we may to conform our selves to the great Example of those glorify'd Spirits. And this is imply'd in the third Petition, *Thy Will be done on Earth as it is in Heaven.* And because we are utterly unable to do these things of our selves, we are here taught to pray for *Grace* to be enabled to perform them.

2. We pray unto God, *That he would send us all things that be needful both for our Souls and Bodies*; that is, that he will give us the spiritual Food of the Word and Sacraments, for the Nourishment of our Souls, and likewise all manner of corporal Provisions, necessary for the Support and Sustenance of our Bodies, and thereby graciously supply the Wants of both. This is imply'd in the fourth Petition, *Give us this day our daily Bread*: where having sought first the Kingdom of God and his Righteousness, we are directed to ask for those temporal Blessings which he hath promis'd to add to those that seek him. And of these we are to ask not such Abundance or Superfluity, as may supersede our Care, and make us, like the *Rich Man* in the Gospel who had Goods laid up for many years, abandon our selves to Ease and Sloth; but to ask every day our daily Bread, that is, Bread sufficient for that day, that we may renew our Devotion, and petition the next day for what may suffice for that, and so every day preserve an Intercourse, and shew our Dependence upon our Maker. This was *Agar's* Prayer, *Give me neither Poverty nor Riches, but feed me with Food convenient for me*, Prov. 30. And having Food and Rayment, with God's daily Blessing upon them, we may well enough learn *there-with to be content*.

3. Our Saviour has taught us farther to pray, *That God will be merciful unto us, and forgive us our Sins*; that is, that to the Mercies that concern this Life, which are but short and perishing, he would add the greater Mercies of Pardon and Forgiveness, that relate to our eternal Life in the World to come. The Sins we pray here to be forgiven, are all manner of Breaches or Transgressions of God's Laws, either by omitting what they require, or committing what they forbid; and that either more immediately against God, or more directly against our Neighbour. All which have guilt enough in them to bind us over to the Penalty of eternal Damnation. Now the remitting of this Guilt, by blotting out our Iniquities, and receiving us into Favor, as if we had never committed them, is the Mercy and Forgiveness we here beg at God's hands: And this is indeed the greatest of all Mercies, and that which alone can sweeten and give a relish to all other: Without this no temporal Blessing whatever can be of any use, or afford any Comfort to us; the Sense of Sin will imbitter all, and where the Guilt of it cries against us, nothing but Misery and Vengeance can sound in our ears. But where this is forgiven, and the Cry of it silenc'd, there all things are serene and quiet, and

G g g g

nothing

nothing but the Voice of Joy and Gladness can be heard within us. This is the Mercy of Mercies, which our Saviour here sends us all upon our Knees to pray for, and the rather, because He hath purchas'd it for us, and by pleading his Merits we shall not fail to receive it. But still we must remember the Conditions upon which it is granted, *viz.* Confession and Repentance: for *he that covereth his Sins, shall not prosper; but he that confesseth and forsaketh them, shall find Mercy*, Prov. 28. 13.

All this is imply'd in the fifth Petition, *Forgive us our Trespases, as we forgive them that trespass against us.* Where another Condition is suppos'd and annex'd to the obtaining of it, and that is, the forgiving of others; for we ask *forgiveness of our Trespases*, upon the same terms, and in the like measure *as we forgive them that trespass against us*: so that without forgiving others, we must not look for forgiveness our selves. He in the Gospel, who having *ten thousand Talents* remitted to him, took his Brother by the Throat for a *hundred Pence*, forfeited all title to Mercy, and was made to pay the utmost Farthing; So likewise (says our Saviour) *will your heavenly Father do to you, if ye forgive not one another their Trespases.*

4. We pray, *That God would save and defend us in all Dangers, ghostly and bodily.* The foregoing Petitions are Prayers for the obtaining all manner of Good; the latter are Supplications for the averting all kinds of Evil: in both which we are here taught to *make our Requests known unto God.* This latter is contain'd in the sixth Petition, *Lead us not into Temptation, but deliver us from Evil.* This the Catechism explains, by his *saving and defending us in all dangers, ghostly and bodily*: That is, as the Church elsewhere teacheth us to pray, (*Epiphany Sunday 4.*) *That God who knoweth us to be set in the midst of so many and great Dangers, that by reason of the frailty of our Natures we cannot always stand upright, would grant us such Strength and Protection, as may support us in all Dangers, and carry us thro all Temptations.* And likewise (*Lent Sunday 2.*) *that he would keep us both outwardly in our Bodies, and inwardly in our Souls; that we may be defended from all Adversities that may happen to the Body, and from all evil Thoughts that may assault and hurt the Soul.* The sense of all which is, that God would either save us from Dangers that they happen not to us, or support us under them if they light upon us; or give us a happy End or Issue out of them, when his Wisdom and Goodness shall think fit. To which end we pray, secondly, to be kept

from

from all Sin and Wickedness; the Cause of all our Troubles, the Root of all the Evils that betide us, and the Bane both of Soul and Body. To arm us against these, we are bid to *watch and pray, that we enter not into Temptation*: for we walk in the midst of Snares, and our own weakness is such, that they are apt too often to betray and prevail over us; and therefore we are to call in the Aid and Assistance of God's Holy Spirit to preserve or deliver us from them. Moreover,

We pray to be kept from our ghostly Enemy, that is, the Devil, who like a roaring Lion goes to and fro, seeking whom he may devour, 1 Pet. 5. 8. Satan is a restless, powerful and subtle Adversary; He beguiled our first Parents in a state of Innocence, and can more easily betray us in a state of Impotence, and much greater Weakness; and therefore we are to fortify our selves against his Wiles, not only by our own Vigilance, but by imploring the Succours of Divine Grace, which will be sufficient to vanquish his Temptations, and to deliver us from the evil One.

Lastly, We pray to be deliver'd from Everlasting Death: This is the greatest of all Dangers, and that to which all Sin and Wickedness, together with all the Temptations of our ghostly Enemies, tend to and end in: 'tis the completion of Misery, and final destruction of Body and Soul for ever in Hell; and therefore this is above all to be pray'd against, and by all possible ways to be prevented. And this can be only done by adding to our Prayers, the Exercises of a Holy Life led in the Fear of God, and in Obedience to his Laws, which is the best Preservative from Everlasting Death, and the only Path that leads to Everlasting Life.

Thus we see both the Object and the Matter of our Prayers and Supplications, as they are prescrib'd to us by our Blessed Saviour.

To which our Text wills us to join,

Thirdly, Our Thanksgivings for Mercies receiv'd, to render them successful: for Ingratitude stops the Current of the Divine Bounty, and nothing but a thankful Sense and Acknowledgment of past Favours, can open the way for future Blessings. And therefore St. Paul directs, That Prayers and Supplications, and giving of Thanks be made for us and for all Men, 1 Tim. 3. 1. And here in the Text, That in everything by Prayer and Supplication,

tion, with Thanksgiving, our Requests be made known unto God.

But what need we (may some say) make our Requests known unto God, who is perfectly acquainted with them already, and knows all our Necessities before we ask? For

Answer, This is to be done, not for Information, to tell any thing unto God which he knows not already, for he is privy to all our Wants and Desires long before, and knows our Thoughts a-far off: but this is to be done by way of Confession and Acknowledgment of our own Inability to help our selves, and of his infinite Power and Readiness to do more for us than we can ask or think.

Beside, God Almighty, who is the Author and Bestower of all Blessings, hath made our asking the Condition of receiving; *I will be sought unto* (says he) *for these things*: And our Saviour hath told us, that we must ask before we can hope to receive.

But then St. James adds, That we must ask in Faith, nothing wavering: for he that wavers is like a Wave of the Sea, driven with the Wind and tossed; and let not that Man think he shall receive any thing of the Lord; for such a doubting and doubleminded Man is unstable in all his ways, James 1. 6, 7, 8. So that we must shew our dependance upon, and affiance in God, before he will hear or answer our Petitions.

This is held forth to us in these words of our Catechism; *And this I trust he will do of his Mercy and Goodness, and therefore I say, Amen, So be it.* Where we are taught two weighty Lessons necessary to the Success of our Prayers.

1. To own all good things to come intirely from the Mercy and Goodness of God. And,

2. To put our whole Trust and Confidence in him, for the obtaining of them.

1. I say, both the Text and Catechism teach us to own all good Things to come merely from the Mercy and Goodness of God; 'tis not from our own Merits, Industry, or any other Abilities, but wholly and solely from the Bounty of our Maker: *Every good Gift, and every perfect Gift* (says St. James) *is from above, and cometh down from the Father of Lights*, Jam. 1. 17. Jacob acknowledged, that he was not worthy of the least of all God's Mercies, or of all the Truth that he had shew'd unto his Servant, Gen. 32. 10. And we may add, that we are not only unworthy of any of his Blessings, but that we deserve the forest of all his Punishments:

nishments: And *because his Compassions fail not, therefore alone it is that we are not consum'd,* as the Church acknowledges in the *Lamentations*, Chap. 3. 22.

In short, All the good Things we enjoy, desire, or want, are to be ascrib'd wholly to the Goodness of God, and to be expected only from the Mercy of our Maker, and the Merits of our Saviour; such low and abasing Thoughts ought we to have of our selves, and such high and magnifying Apprehensions are we to entertain of the Divine Bounty. And having wrought our Minds to a true sense of these things, we are,

Lastly, To put our whole Trust and Confidence in God for the obtaining of them. So the Catechism directs in these words; *And this I trust he will do of his Mercy and Goodness.* The Apostle wills us *to come boldly to the Throne of Grace, that we may obtain Mercy, and find Grace to help in time of need,* Heb. 4. 16. A dear Child comes with boldness to an indulgent Father for a supply of all his Wants: And *if earthly Parents know how to give good Gifts to their Children, how much more will your heavenly Father give good things to them that ask them?* Their Compassions and Abilities are both infinitely less than his; and if they are so ready and willing to relieve the Necessities of their Children, we may rest assured that God, who is much more able, will likewise be far more willing to hear and relieve the Wants of his People that call upon him. Hence we are bid to draw nigh to him in full assurance of Faith, to address with Confidence, and to make a full and free discovery of our Wants and Requests to him, who never faileth them that trust him. 'Tis but to perform our part in doing what he hath commanded; and we may be assured he will not fail of his, in performing what he hath promis'd. Let us beware of having recourse to any unlawful or indirect means to obtain our Desires, but commit our selves unto God in well-doing; and he will bring all that to pass, which may be necessary to our Comfort here, and Happiness hereafter. All this is imply'd in the *Amen* added to this Prayer, which signifies a full Assent and Consent to the Truth and Faithfulness, and also to the Power, and Readiness of God to grant what we ask of him. The word is sometimes Optative, and translated, *So be it*; and sometimes Declarative, and render'd, *So it shall be*: Both which give us a good Assurance of a gracious Answer to our Petitions.

And

And now what greater Incouragement can we have to make our Request known unto God, and to put our whole Trust in him, who hath so well secur'd to us the Success of our Petitions? More especially, Let us daily put up our Requests to him in that Divine Form of Prayer which Christ himself hath taught us, being the most perfect of all Prayers. And let us add our hearty *Amen* to all things contain'd in it, which as we have great reason to desire, so have we good ground to believe will be granted to us; and therefore, whenever it is rehears'd, *Let all the People say, Amen.*

A PRAC.

A
PRACTICAL EXPOSITION
OF THE
THIRD PART
OF THE
Church-Catechism:
CONTAINING
The DOCTRINE of the
HOLY SACRAMENTS.

1 Cor. 11. 24, 25. *This do in remembrance of me.*



Printed in the Year 1707.

The PREFACE.

WHEN our Blessed Saviour had put an end to the numerous and costly Rites and Sacrifices of Moses's Law, which were all fulfil'd and compleated in him, he instituted only two Sacraments to succeed in the room of them, viz. Baptism, and the Lord's Supper; the one as a Sacrament of Initiation, to enter us into the Church; the other as a Sacrament of Confirmation to preserve and continue us in it. And tho the Legal Rites and Ceremonies, being only Shadows of good Things to come, vanish'd and were done away when the Substance came; yet these Gospel-Institutions, for their Excellence and perpetual Usefulness are to last to the World's end.

The former for their Number and Cost, and likewise for the Frequency and Strictness of their Observation, were a Yoke too heavy for the Necks of us or our Forefathers to bear; whereas the latter, by the fewness and cheapness of their Administration, hath rendred the Yoke of Christ easy, and his Burden light.

The Explication of these two Sacred Ordinances is the Subject of this last part of the Catechism; which containing the highest Duties of Religion, and the sublimest Mysteries of Christianity, ought to be well known, consider'd and observ'd of all Christians.

To help them therein, the Reader will here find those Holy Mysteries in some measure unfolded to them; whereby the Ignorant may be instructed, the Negligent convinc'd and excited to the frequent use of them, and all of us better prepar'd for the worthy Receiving of them. Which things may serve to satisfy us of the Benefit and Comfort of the Means appointed for our Salvation, and to promote the Devotion of such as wait at God's Altar.

The attaining of these great and good Ends, is the whole Aim and Ambition of the Author.

Farewel.



A Prac-

To the Reverend Doctor *GODOLPHIN*,
Dean of *St. Pauls* and Provost of *Eaton*,
and the Worthy Fellows of that Socie-
ty, my Honoured Patron.

Reverend Sirs,

THE remembrance of your former Favors,
which I ought never to forget, hath prompted
me to take this opportunity of a publick Ac-
knowledgment; which tho small, yet being
the best Return I can yet make, I hope will not miss of a
candid Acceptance.

'Tis to your kindness, that I owe both the leisure and ability
of composing these Discourses; and therefore you may justly
claim a Share in them: by which you may see how I have
employ'd my Time, and improv'd my Talent in that Station
wherein you were pleas'd to set me. And I cannot doubt,
but as you have been a Patron to the Author, so you will
be to the Work too, and then it will not fear the Censure or
Assaults of any Adversaries.

Indeed, the lovers of Innovation have labor'd hard to cast
contempt on the Church-Catechism, and to set up their
new invented Models of Instruction against it.

But the Excellency and Usefulness, the Fulness, and withal the Conciseness of its Composure, hath baffled all Attempts of that kind, and rather increas'd than eclips'd its Glory.

The Subject of this part of the Catechism, is the Doctrine of the Holy Sacraments; a Subject truly Great and Divine, containing the sublime Mysteries of our Religion, and the principal Tokens of that Respect and Remembrance which we owe to our Blessed Saviour, who was pleas'd to leave these as Legacies and Memorials of himself, to be continued in his Church to his Second Coming.

May all the Blessings of Heaven and Earth be multiplied upon you, that you may support and adorn the two famous and flourishing Societies to which you belong; and may you at last be advanc'd to a much higher and nobler Society in Heaven, is the hearty Wish and Prayer of,

Reverend Sirs,

Your Obliged and Humbly

Devoted Servant,

Matth. Hole.

*A Practical Exposition of the Third Part
of the Church-Catechism.*

DISCOURSE I.

1 John 5. 6. *This is he that came by Water and Blood, even Jesus Christ ; not by Water only, but by Water and Blood : And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is Truth.*

HAVING finish'd the three great Summaries of Faith, Obedience and Devotion, contain'd in the *Apostles Creed*, the *Ten Commandments*, and the *Lord's Prayer*, which make up the Second Part of the Church-Catechism ; I proceed now to the

Third Part, which contains the Doctrine of the *Holy Sacraments* : Where the First Question is,

How many Sacraments hath Christ ordain'd in his Church ?

To which the Answer is, *Two only as generally necessary to Salvation ; that is to say, Baptism, and the Supper of our Lord.*

In treating whereof, 'twill be necessary to speak something, *First*, Of the Use and Benefit of the Holy Sacraments, and their general Necessity to Salvation. And,

Secondly, Of the Number of them ordain'd by Christ in his Church to that end ; which I shall do from these words of the Apostle, *This is he that came by Water and Blood, &c.*

The Words relate to a very remarkable Passage in the History of our Blessed Saviour's Crucifixion ; where we read, that when one of the Souldiers with a Spear pierced his precious Side, there forthwith came out both Water and Blood, John 19. 34. which the Fathers generally interpret as Signs and Emblems of the two Sacra-

H h h h

ments ;

ments; the *Water* representing Baptism, and the *Blood* the Lord's Supper; both which were ordain'd by our Saviour in the Celebration of them. The Cruelty of the Souldiers did but inhanche the Kindness of our Saviour, and the Instruments of his Death became the Means of procuring to us Eternal Life: The Spear that pierc'd his Sacred Side, open'd there a Fountain to purge away the Guilt of Sin, and all manner of Uncleannefs; every part of the Tragedy acted on him, was to fulfil the Prophecies concerning him, and the whole History of his Sufferings serves to confirm our Faith in the Myſtery of Man's Salvation.

But to come more cloſely to the Holy Sacraments, I muſt conſider the Inſtitution, Uſe and Benefit of them, all which are here ſuppos'd; and then proceed to the Number of them, which is here inquir'd after in the Catechiſm, and delar'd in the Text. And here I muſt begin,

1. With the Inſtitution of the Holy Sacraments, which are here ſaid to be ordain'd by Chriſt in his Church.

As for Baptiſm, that was requir'd of the Proſelytes of old in the Jewiſh Church, who were receiv'd into Covenant by Baptiſm as well as Circumciſion; the former whereof is ſtill continued and injoyn'd aſreſh in the Chriſtian Church. St. John the Baptiſt, who was the Herald to proclaim our Saviour, and the Harbinger to prepare for his Reception, did it by calling all People to Repentance and Baptiſm. And we read of his baptizing great Multitudes that came to him in Jordan, *confefſing their Sins*. After which we find our Bleſſed Saviour giving a Commiſſion to his Apoſtles, *to go teach and baptize all Nations*; which Commiſſion they executed, by calling upon all Perſons to *repent and be baptized*: which Ordinance is deriv'd down, and continues to this Day.

As for the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, we find that inſtituted likewise by our Bleſſed Saviour, who *in the Night in which he was betray'd, took Bread and brake it, and gave it to his Diſciples, ſaying, Take, eat, this is my Body which was broken for you*. Likewise, *After Supper he took the Cup, and when he had bleſſed it, gave it to them, ſaying, Drink ye all of this, for this is my Blood of the New Teſtament, ſhed for the Remiſſion of Sins; Do this in remembrance of me*. By which we plainly ſee the Truth of what our Catechiſm here affirms of theſe Sacraments, that they were ordain'd by Chriſt in his Church. Then,

2. For

2. For the Use and Benefit of these Holy Sacraments, we find them deriv'd down thro all Ages of the Church, and us'd by all good Christians ever since, as the Signs and Seals of the New Covenant made between God and his People; the one being the Rite of Admission, or entring us into the Church; the other of Confirmation to establish us in it, and to convey to us the Benefits and Privileges of it. For as in our Prayers we represent our Wants unto God, and beg the Supply of them; so in the Holy Sacraments God promises and seals to us the return of them, and assures us of the Grant and Performance of them: Insomuch that Prayer is, as it were, the Wing that mounts our Souls to Heaven, whereas the Holy Sacraments bring down Heaven to us, and are as it were the Hands to reach out the Blessing, and set the Seal to it: by the one God hears from us, by the other we hear from him; and not only so but handle, tast and see that the Lord is gracious.

But that which we are mainly to consider in this Question, is the Number of these Sacraments, *How many Christ hath ordain'd in his Church*: Which we are all concern'd to know, that we may neither take from, nor add to them; to which end the Catechism here tells us of *two only as generally necessary to Salvation, that is to say, Baptism, and the Supper of our Lord.*

And here we are to take notice of two Extremes or Errors to be avoided by us; the one is, of those that lessen, the other of those that increase the Number of the Sacraments.

Of the First sort, are those Sectaries and Enthusiasts that decry the Use of the Holy Sacraments, and lay aside one or both of them.

Of the other are the Romanists, who have multiply'd their Number, and added to them.

For the First, There are but too many risen up of late, who to the great Disturbance of the Church, and Dishonour of Christianity, decry the Use of the Holy Sacraments, and lay aside one or both of them: Hence some have derogated from the Honour and Use of Baptism, and ascrib'd no greater Virtue or Efficacy to it, than to any ordinary washing.

Others have detracted from the Honour of the Eucharist, or the Lord's Supper, and esteem'd it no better than an ordinary Meal; and both have despis'd them as useles and needless Institutions. I speak not now of those, who thro Superstition or Profaneness neglect these Sacred Mysteries, of which there are

but too many; but of those who thro mistaken Opinion deny the Use and Benefit of them, and so lay them wholly aside, thinking themselves above these Carnal Ordinances, and that they sute not the Spiritual State and Dispensation of the Gospel: by which means they shew no greater regard to the Holy Sacraments ordain'd by Christ in the Gospel, than to the antiquated Rites and Ceremonies of *Moses's* Law; and so take Baptism and the Lord's Supper to carry no better Force and Obligation than Circumcision and the Passover, tho our Saviour instituted the former, and order'd them to succeed in the room of the latter.

But for the better Satisfaction of both these, it will be requisite (as the Catechism directs) to shew the Necessity of the Holy Sacraments in order to Salvation, which shall be done in the next. In the mean time we are,

2. To consider the Addition made by the Church of *Rome* to the Number of these Sacraments: for tho the Gospel (as the Catechism suggests) mentions but *two only as generally necessary to Salvation*, represented in our Text by the *Water and Blood* that issued out of our Saviour's Side; yet they have multiply'd them into Seven, and to Baptism and the Lord's Supper have added Five more, *viz.* Confirmation, Orders, Matrimony, Penance, and Extreme Unction.

The Grounds and Reasons alledg'd for this Addition, are but slender and insufficient. As,

1. They alledg that the things added by them, are all Sacred, and by outward Signs import an inward and mysterious Signification. Thus Confirmation, by the laying on of the Hands of the Bishop, implies the conveying of Grace to enable to the performance of the Baptismal Vow: Orders, by the same Ceremony, import the conferring of the Holy Ghost: Matrimony represents the Mystical Union between Christ and his Church: Penance, by some outward Acts, is a sign and help to Repentance; and Extreme Unction, administred by the Elders in the Name of the Lord, signifies and seals the Remission of Sins. And therefore all these are to be reckon'd in the Number of Sacraments.

But if this were a sufficient Reason, we might multiply and add to them many more: for an Oath, which by the laying on of Hands, and kissing the Book, signifies the invoking the Testimony of God; and all the Parables and Metaphors in the Gospel, which by outward Resemblances carry an inward and mysterious Signification, might upon the same account be reckon'd

in

in that number ; so that this inferring too much must be a bad Argument.

Again, 2. they alledg, that St. *Jerom* and other Fathers, frequently call these foremention'd Acts and Mysteries of Religion by the Name of *Sacraments*, and therefore they may be well enough so reputed.

But if that were enough to denominate them properly such, then might the Cross and many other things be added to and taken for Sacraments ; for St. *Austin* styles the Cross by the name of *Sacramentum Crucis*, the Sacrament of the Cross. *Tertullian* calls the Helve wherewith *Elisha* recover'd the Ax out of the Water, *Sacramentum Ligni*, the Sacrament of Wood. St. *Jerom* styles Martyrdom a Sacrament ; and an Oath both in Sacred and Civil Authors frequently pass'es under that Name : so that that you see would mightily swell and increase the Number of Sacraments. Moreover,

Lastly, Their observing something Sacred and Mysterious in the number Seven, as the *seven Angels*, the *seven Trumpets*, the *seven Vials*, and the like ; and their enlarging the Sacraments upon such an account to that Number, is vain and frivolous : for there are other Numbers to which the Scriptures seem to ascribe as great, or greater Mystery. The number Three might be esteem'd Sacred upon the account of the Holy Trinity ; the number Ten for the sake of the Ten Commandments, and the like : so that the ascribing any thing of Virtue or Mystery to any Number, is rather a piece of Superstition, than any solid Reason or Foundation for augmenting the Number of the Holy Sacraments.

The truth of this Matter is, That the Antients usually rendring the Greek word *μυστήριον*, by the Latin word *Sacramentum*, whereby every thing that carries with it some secret Meaning, or some sacred Representation, is by them term'd a Sacrament, has been the true Reason of multiplying the Number of the Sacraments, and occasion'd all the Disputes about it. So that to clear up this Matter, we may consider the word Sacrament,

1. In its largest Extent and Signification for every thing that is Sacred, or is apply'd to holy Uses, or set to represent any holy Thing ; in which sense all the Mysteries of Religion, and all outward Signs that belong to or set forth Divine things, are call'd Sacraments : But if we take the word,

2. In a more strict and proper sense for those Sacred Rites instituted by Christ, as the necessary Means and Pledges of Salvation

tion appertaining to all Christians; so we shall find Baptism and the Lord's Supper the two only Sacraments ordain'd by our Saviour to that end.

Now to this strict and proper Notion of a Sacrament, two things are here mention'd as requisite; the

One, that it be a thing necessary to Salvation; the

Other, that it be generally necessary to all Persons for that end.

Now both these concur in the two Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, being both instituted of Christ, as the necessary means of Salvation; the one to be the Sacrament of Initiation, to receive us into the Church, and intitle us to the Privileges of it; the other to be the Sacrament of Confirmation, to keep and preserve us in it, and to convey to us the Benefits of it.

And as these are necessary to Salvation, so are they generally so to all Persons, none finding Admission into Heaven, but by the Door of Baptism; nor are any cherish'd to eternal Life, but by the spiritual Repast of the Lord's Supper, as will be more fully shew'd hereafter. This is more than can be affirm'd of those other things adopted by the Church of *Rome* into the number of Sacraments; for neither Orders, Matrimony, Penance, nor extreme Unction, are things necessary to Salvation, and much less are they generally so to all Persons, since many are and will be sav'd without them. They are indeed very useful and convenient things for some Persons, and in some cases, for the promoting of Good and preventing of Evil, and so in a large sense may be stil'd Sacred Things and Holy Mysteries; but they are not of that universal Necessity and Importance, as to intitle them to the Honor, or give them the strict and proper Notion of Sacraments, which must be something necessary and requir'd of all Persons in order to their Salvation. Upon the whole then, this being a Dispute chiefly about Words, that have doubtful and different Significations, may perhaps be reckon'd in the number of those curious and idle *Questions*, which the Apostle would have Christians avoid, as engendring Strife; which they that affect, dote about *Questions and Strifes of Words, whereof cometh Envy, Strife, Railings, evil Surmises, and perverse Disputings of Men of corrupt Minds, 1 Tim. 6. 4, &c. 2 Tim. 2. 23.* And therefore it will concern us more to apply our selves to the Knowledg and Use of these holy Sacraments, than to differ and contend about the number of them, that we may feel the Efficacy, and reap the Benefits consign'd and convey'd by them.

To conclude this Point, it savours not a little of the antient Piety, to retain the two antient Sacraments of the New Testament, *Baptism and the Supper of the Lord*; both which were shadow'd out by the *Water and Blood*, which flow'd from our Saviour's Side, as he hang'd on the Cross: which the Fathers tell us, proceeded not from any natural Cause, but contain'd something miraculous and mysterious; signifying to us, that as Sin enter'd into the World by the Woman which came from *Adam's Side*, so Salvation came in by the Water and Blood that issued forth from the Side of our Saviour, which they therefore generally apply to the two Sacraments. *He came not by Water only*, to signify that Baptism alone is not sufficient, nor may we singly rely upon it; *but by Water and Blood*, to signify that as his Blood was necessary to the purging away Sin, so our receiving of it is necessary to intitle us to the Pardon purchas'd by it. To attest which, the Spirit is here brought in as a *Witness, which is the Spirit of Truth*. This Spirit descended upon our Saviour in the Form of a Dove at his Baptism, and came down in the Form of a Comforter at his Crucifixion, to confirm our Faith in both. And as we hereby learn the Original of the two Sacraments, so ought we to keep to them, without adding to or detracting from them.

DISCOURSE II.

John 3. 5. *Jesus answer'd, Verily, Verily, I say unto thee, Except a Man be born again of Water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God.*

IN the first Question of the Catechism touching the Doctrine of the Sacraments, I observ'd these three things.

1. The Institution and Use of the Holy Sacraments, which are said to be *ordain'd by Christ in his Church*.
2. The Number of them, which are here declar'd to be *two only, that is to say, Baptism and the Supper of our Lord*.
3. The *general Necessity of them to Salvation*: for so they are here said to be unto all Persons.

The two first were handled in the last Exercise; wherein I shew'd the express Precepts of Christ, ordaining these for the Use

Use of his Church, and the little reason of adding and multiplying more. I proceed now to the

Third, which shews us the general Necessity of these two Sacraments, in order to the Salvation of Mankind. To evince which, I shall begin,

First, with the Sacrament of Baptism, the Necessity whereof is here plainly set forth by our Blessed Saviour: *Verily, Verily, I say unto you, Except a Man be born of Water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God.* The words are part of a Conference held between *Nicodemus* a Ruler of the Jews, and our Blessed Saviour: the Fame of Christ's Doctrine and Miracles had brought him to him for farther Satisfaction. He came by night for fear of the Jews; and being come, told our Saviour that he took him for a Teacher come from God, for none could do those Miracles which he did, except God were with him, ver. 2. Our Saviour lik'd his Confession, but withal told him, that that of it self was not sufficient, but he must be born again before he could see the Kingdom of God, ver. 3. *Nicodemus* startled at this, asks the Question, *How a Man can be born again when he is old, or enter the second time into his Mother's Womb, and be born?* To which our Saviour replies in the words of the Text, *Verily, Verily, I say unto thee, except a Man be born again of Water, &c.* meaning that he spake not of a natural but spiritual Regeneration. The word *Verily, Verily*, betokens not only the certain Truth, but the exceeding great Weight and Importance of what comes after it; and the following Words bespeak no less the indispensable Necessity of it: *Except a Man be born again of Water and the Spirit, &c.*

To be born again supposes a former Birth, and that is our first coming into the World, in which we were born dead in Trespasses and Sins, the Children of Wrath, and Heirs of Damnation; whereas to be born again, is our being receiv'd into the Church, by which we are recover'd from that spiritual Death to a new Life, and thereby made the Children of God, and Heirs of his heavenly Kingdom.

To be born again of Water, can be meant only of our being baptiz'd, which is the only New Birth we are capable of by that Element: and the washing away the Guilt of Sin, represented in that Sacrament by the outward washing of Water, is in Scripture often stil'd a *New Birth*, or being born again to a lively Hope. 'Tis so stil'd, because the plunging of the Body under Water, us'd in the beginning of Christianity, signify'd our being dead and bury'd with

with Christ in Baptism ; so the rising out of it betoken'd the reviving again, and rising to a Newness of Life. This admitting Profelytes by washing, was us'd likewise among the Jews ; and he that was so admitted, was said to be *recens natus*, new-born : which washing is by the Apostle call'd *the Laver of Regeneration*, Tit. 3. 5. And they that are so receiv'd into the Church, are said to be *born a-new of Water*.

To be *born again of Water and the Spirit*, signifies the Communication of that Spirit of Christ in some measure that descended on the Apostles, and thereby deriving spiritual Life and Strength to the baptized Party. For as in the first Creation the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the Waters, and thereby quicken'd the rude indigested Matter of the World into an orderly and beautiful Frame ; even so in the new Creation or Regeneration of a Christian, the Spirit of Christ moveth upon the Waters of Baptism, and thereby gives a new and spiritual Life, bringing Light out of Darkness, and Order out of Confusion. And as the Angel stir'd the Waters in the Pool of *Bethesda*, before they became healing and medicinal to the Body ; so the Spirit's moving and acting upon the Waters of Baptism, makes them salutary and healthful to the Soul. This is the Baptism of the Holy Ghost, that was added by our Saviour to John's Baptism by Water : *I indeed baptize you with Water* (saith he) *but there cometh one after me, that is mightier than I ; he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with Fire*. And this he did first in that plentiful Effusion of the Holy Ghost on the Apostles and others on the Day of Pentecost ; and this he still continues to do, by giving his Holy Spirit in some measure to all Christians at their Reception into the Church. This is the reason that Water and the Spirit are so often mention'd together in Scripture, because they go together in Baptism : our Saviour here joins them in our Text, and the Apostle in his Epistle to *Titus* hath put together the *Washing of Regeneration*, and the *Renewing of the Holy Ghost*, the two memorable Acts of Baptism, in which the former receive all its Efficacy and Virtue from the latter.

By *entring into the Kingdom of God*, we are to understand here our Admission into Christ's Church, which is his Kingdom of Grace, in order to our future Entrance and Reception into his Kingdom of Glory. And lastly,

Our Saviour's saying, *Except a Man be born again of Water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God*, plainly shews, that

that we must be admitted into the former, before we can have any hopes of Entrance and Admission into the latter.

And because Baptism is the Door that leads to both, here is evidently held forth the Necessity of that Sacrament in order to our Salvation; which Lesson we are likewise taught in sundry other places of the New Testament. The Apostles exhorted all their Converts to be baptiz'd in the Name of our Lord Jesus, that they might receive Salvation from him, as we read at large in the Acts of the Apostles. St. Paul tells us, That Christ loved his Church, and deliver'd himself for it, that he might sanctify it, purging it with the washing of Water, Eph. 5. 26. meaning, that Baptism purgeth away the Guilt and Defilement of Sin, without which they both lie upon us, and leave us in the Gall of Bitterness, and the Bond of Iniquity. And such (saith he to the Corinthians) were some of you, till ye were wash'd in the Waters of Baptism, justify'd in the Name of the Lord, and sanctify'd by the Spirit of our God, 1 Cor. 6. 11. Which great Blessings are first and chiefly deriv'd and bestow'd on us in our Baptism; and therefore St. Peter tells us, that Baptism doth now save us, not so much by the outward washing away the Filth of the Flesh, as by the inward purifying of the Heart, and the Answer of a good Conscience, 1 Pet. 3. 21. And elsewhere we read that not by Works of Righteousness which we have done, but by his Mercy he saved us, by the washing of Regeneration and Renewing of the Holy Ghost, Tit. 3. 5, 6. which words plainly set forth not only the Benefits, but Necessity of Baptism; without which our Saviour here tells us, that we cannot enter into the Kingdom of God, either his Kingdom of Grace here or Glory hereafter: both which are entail'd only on his Disciples, who by Faith and Baptism follow him in the Regeneration, as we read, Mat. 19. 28. and elsewhere, He that believeth and is baptiz'd shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned, Mark 16. 16.

But here it may be ask'd, If Baptism be so necessary to Salvation, what then will become of those that die unbaptiz'd; the number of which, by reason of the Negligence of some, and the Ignorance of others, is not a few? And must all these be excluded from the Kingdom of Heaven?

In answer to this I say,

1. That tho Baptism is necessary to Salvation, yet we may not affirm it to be so absolutely and indispensably necessary to that end, as that without it 'tis utterly impossible to be saved. For the God hath appointed this and other Ordinances in his Church,

†

to

to convey Mercy and Blessings to us, yet he hath not so far ty'd up himself to them, as not to be able to save without them. His Power is infinite, and his Mercy is over all his Works : He preserv'd the Bodies of the *Israelites* in the Wilderness without the Staff of Bread, the common Support of them ; and sav'd their Souls without the Sacrament of Circumcision, the Seal of the Covenant to that end : which shews that he is not so confin'd to Means, but that he can and does sometime save as well without as with them, tho they are of his own appointing. But yet,

2. We must distinguish between the ordinary Methods of Divine Providence, and Cases extraordinary : The former are to be the Rule and Direction of our Duty, tho the latter may not be always despair'd of or depended upon. It would be a vain Presumption for any to refuse his daily Bread, because God can and hath supported some without it ; neither would the Folly and Danger be less to neglect the Waters of Baptism, because God is able to save as well without as with them. Again,

3. We must distinguish between an unavoidable or involuntary Omission of Baptism, and a wilful Neglect or Contempt of it : the former may consist well enough with Salvation, tho the latter cannot.

There may be some Times and Cases when Baptism may not be had, in which Cases the Desire of Baptism may qualify for Mercy, and be sufficient to Salvation, where there is no Opportunity : but where this Ordinance is administer'd, and Men are call'd upon to come to it, if they thro Carelessness, Error, or Obstinacy allow themselves in the Neglect of it, there the Case is extremely sad and dangerous ; for Baptism being the Gate of Entrance into the Church, out of which ordinarily there is no Salvation, they that enter not by it, can have no Right to the Mercies and Privileges of the Covenant, and consequently can never enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. By which we see the general Necessity of this Sacrament, and the Danger of despising it, where it may be had.

But whence doth this Necessity of Baptism proceed, or upon what is it grounded ? Why,

1. This proceeds from the express Precept and Command of Christ, which the Schools call *Necessitas Præcepti*, or a Necessity arising not so much from the Nature of the thing, as by virtue of a Divine Precept that calls all Christians to it. The Commission given to the Apostles, and in them to all the succeeding Ministers

of the Gospel, was to go teach all Nations, Baptizing them, &c. signifying, that Disciples are to be receiv'd into the Church by the Waters of Baptism. Accordingly we find all the Profelytes and Converts to Christianity, mention'd in the Acts of the Apostles, were admitted into it by this Ceremony: *Repent and be baptiz'd* (saith St. Peter to the three thousand Converts) Acts 2. 38. *Arise, why tarriest thou, and be baptiz'd* (saith Ananias to Saul upon his Conversion to Christianity) Acts 22. 16. Lydia and her House was admitted into the Church this way, and so was the Jaylor and his Family, and so have all Christians been ever since.

2. But beside this Necessity proceeding from the Divine Precept, Baptism is farther necessary, *necessitate Medii*, as a necessary means of the Remission of Sin, and renewing our Natures, both which are confer'd upon us, and convey'd to us by the Waters of Baptism: By this we are said to be born again, and receive the Principle of a new Life, being regenerated by the Spirit of God, and thereby enabled to fulfil the Conditions of the New Covenant. The first Christians receiv'd the Holy Ghost at their Baptism in its miraculous Gifts and Powers, for the Confirmation and Propagation of the Gospel; and tho those extraordinary Gifts are now ceas'd with the Reason of them, yet we still receive in our Baptism the ordinary Gifts and Graces of the Spirit, that help to remove the Guilt of Original Sin, to heal the Corruption of our Natures, and to work in us that Faith and Repentance, which if we put not a Bar and Impediment to it our selves, will be effectual to our Salvation. And tho these blessed Effects of Baptism do not presently appear in Infants, no more than the Power of Reasoning, and other Acts of the rational Soul, which by reason of the Tenderneſs of their Age they are incapable of shewing: yet having the Root and Seeds of them planted in them by the Influence of the Holy Spirit, they after spring forth in the Fruits of a new and spiritual Life, which at last grow up and lead to Life everlasting. And this is that being born again of Water and the Spirit, which our Saviour here makes necessary to our entrance into the Kingdom of Heaven. From this Discourse we may infer,

1. The extreme Danger of neglecting or denying the Use of Baptism: For if Christ has made this necessary to Salvation, and appointed it as the Door of Entrance into his Heavenly Kingdom, what unspeakable Folly and Madness is it to deprive our Relations of this Benefit, and to shut as it were the Gate of

†

Heaven

Heaven against them ! Sure they must be hard-hearted Parents, who bring Children into the Miseries of this World, without taking care to preserve them from the greater Miseries of the next, and suffer them to perish for want of the Waters of Baptism, where they may be so freely and so easily had. And who that tenders the Welfare of Children, would wilfully omit the means of procuring to them so great Good, and preserving them from so much Evil ? Methinks if there were nothing but the constant Practice of the Catholick Church, and the Custom of the Country where we live, we should be asham'd to neglect this Sacred Rite ; but being the Command of our Saviour, and the Condition of our Salvation, we should be more than ordinarily afraid to omit it.

2. We may infer hence the Danger not only of denying, but deferring this Holy Sacrament : Delays we say are dangerous, but they are in nothing more so, than in the weighty matters of Salvation. To delay Baptism, is to expose our selves and Relations to the greatest of hazards ; for if there be no Entrance into the Kingdom of God without being born again of Water and the Spirit, how unsafe is it to defer this new Birth, and to put off our being born again till we are old ? We all know the Uncertainty of human Life, and the many Casualties we are daily and hourly subject to ; and why then should we leave Salvation to so great a hazard, and so lightly incur the peril of Damnation ?

Wherefore lastly, Let us all beware of denying or delaying this holy Ordinance, which being the Entrance into the Church, and the Gate of Heaven, let us come to it for Admission into both.

DISCOURSE III.

John 6. 53. *Jesus said unto them, Verily, Verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the Flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his Blood, there is no Life in you.*

I Shew'd in my last the Necessity of the first Sacrament of Baptism, in order to Salvation, from that express Asseveration of our Blessed Saviour, *Verily, Verily, I say unto you, except a Man be born again of Water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God*: I come now to shew the same of that other Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, from the like express Assertion of Christ himself, in these words, *Verily, Verily, I say unto you, except ye eat the Flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his Blood, there is no Life in you.*

1. By *eating the Flesh and drinking the Blood of the Son of Man*, we are to understand the receiving that Holy Sacrament of the Eucharist, which was instituted for the Commemoration of both: For tho the Word of God be sometimes stil'd the Food of the Soul, and the digesting of Christ's Doctrine, may in a large and improper Sense be express'd by eating his Flesh and drinking his Blood; yet I take it here more especially to relate to that part of it which concerns the Death and Sufferings of our Saviour: and so the eating of his Flesh and drinking his Blood will more properly refer to the partaking of those Sacred Elements which represent the Body and Blood of Christ, and convey to us the Benefits procur'd by them. Again,

2. This eating of Christ's Flesh and drinking his Blood, must not be taken in a carnal and cannibal Sense, as if we literally eat the very natural Substance of Christ's Body and Blood; for Christ's Body being but one, and in Heaven too, cannot possibly be in sundry places at once, and much less be devour'd by sundry Persons at the same time.

3. Therefore this Expression must be understood in a spiritual and figurative sense; for the Flesh and Blood of Christ are here set to signify the bitter Sufferings he underwent in both, and our eating and drinking of them is the applying of them to our selves, for the Benefit and Comfort of our Souls: so that when we firmly believe Christ's Death and Passion, and thankfully receive those
Ele-

Elements that are appointed to represent them, then are we in a spiritual sense said to feed upon Christ, and to eat his Flesh and Blood for the Nourishment of our Souls. For as the Sign is often put for the thing signify'd, so Bread and Wine in this Sacrament are put for the Body and Blood of Christ represented by them; and when we outwardly take and eat the one, we are said inwardly to receive and feed on the other.

But what is that Life that is convey'd by this spiritual Food? for we are told in the next Verse, that *he that eateth his Flesh and drinketh his Blood, hath Life in him*; and our Text declares, that without this *there is no Life in us*.

In answer to this, by Life here we are to understand,

1. A spiritual Life of Grace here; and
2. An eternal Life of Glory hereafter: Both which are cherish'd and confirm'd by this holy Sacrament.

1. I say, there is a spiritual Life of Grace to be led here; and this (as I before observ'd) is begun in Baptism, when the Spirit moving in and upon those Waters, infuses his Grace into us, and renders it the Laver of Regeneration. By this means we enter upon a new State, and receive a Principle of a new Life, for the healing our Nature, and quickening us to every good Word and Work; then it is that old things pass away, and all things become new: we gain new Relations, being the adopted Sons of God, and thereby enabled to cry *Abba Father*. Jesus Christ becomes our elder Brother, and we nearly ally'd to all the Saints both in Heaven and Earth. In short, by this spiritual Life here, we understand an inward vital Principle of Grace, wrought in the Soul by the Spirit of God, whereby 'tis quicken'd and enabled to walk on in the ways of God: *You hath he quicken'd* (saith the Apostle) *who were dead in Trespases and Sins*, Eph. 2. 5. And Verse 10. *We are his Workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good Works, which God hath ordain'd, that we should walk in them*.

And as this vital Principle is first begun and planted in us by the Sacrament of Baptism, so is it preserv'd and cherish'd in us by this other Sacrament of the Lord's Supper; which is a standing Ordinance in Christ's Church for the continuing, confirming, and encreasing Grace in the Members of it: *The Life that I now live* (saith St. Paul) *I live by the Faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me*, Gal. 2. 20. As our natural Life is in the Blood, and our Bodies are supported by the continual Supplies we have of it from our daily Food; so our spiritual Life

consists

consists in the Blood of Christ, and our Souls are preserv'd by the Supplies of Grace we derive from it. But beside this spiritual Life of Grace here, there is,

2. An eternal Life of Glory hereafter : And this consists in the Maturity and Perfection of the former. For as Grace differs from Glory not in Kind, but only in Degree ; so a Life of Grace begun here, when 'tis compleated and consummated in Heaven, becomes a Life of Glory. Holiness in its Perfection is Happiness, and Grace refin'd from the Corruptions and Imperfections of this present State is Glory ; they differ only as a Child does from a Man : for Grace is the Infancy and Minority of Glory, and Glory is the Manhood and Maturity of Grace. So that a Life led here in the Love and Practice of those Christian Vertues that rectify and ennoble our Natures, will hereafter ripen and advance into a Life of Glory, which consists in a more perfect and eternal Exercise of them.

Now as Baptism is that sacred Ordinance by which we are born again, and begotten to this lively Hope ; so is the Lord's Supper that holy Sacrament by which these Seeds of Grace are cherish'd in us, and grow up unto eternal Life. This our Blessed Saviour insists upon, and proves at large in this Chapter ; wherein he compares the Bread that he gave them, with that which *Moses* gave the *Israelites* in the Wilderness, withal shewing how much the one excel'd the other : *Your Fathers* (saith he) *did eat Manna in the Wilderness, and are dead* : That was not sufficient to preserve a natural, and much less to procure eternal Life ; but *the Bread* (saith he) *that I give, cometh down from Heaven, of which if a Man eat, he shall not die*. And then for their Satisfaction adds, *I am that living Bread which came down from Heaven, if any Man eat of this Bread, he shall live for ever*, ver. 49, 50, 51. His Flesh preserves from Corruption, and his Blood is a Potion of Immortality, by partaking of which we are fed and nourish'd to eternal Life : for which reason he justly styles it Meat indeed and Drink indeed, and wills us *not to labor for the Meat that perisheth, but for this that endureth to everlasting Life*.

And this will lead me more particularly to consider the Necessity of this Sacrament in order to Salvation ; which is here expressly set forth : *Except ye eat the Flesh and drink the Blood of the Son of Man, there is no Life in you* ; that is, there is no spiritual Life of Grace here, nor any Hopes of an eternal Life of Glory in the World to come. For as the natural Life of the Body is supported

ported by the Staff of Bread, without which it must necessarily decay and fall to the ground ; so the spiritual Life of the Soul is maintain'd by the living Bread reach'd out in this Sacrament, which if withheld, it must pine, and starve, and die away.

Now the Necessity of this Sacrament proceeds chiefly from the exprefs Command of our Blessed Saviour, who has requir'd and expects it from us : He who purchas'd Life and Salvation for us, may justly prescribe the Terms and Condition of his bestowing it ; and consequently, he having made this the Condition of his conferring Life, we stand indispensably oblig'd for our own Welfare to observe it. *Do this in remembrance of me*, was our Saviour's Precept at the Institution of this Sacrament, which he design'd for a Memorial of himself ; where he lays a strict Charge upon all his Followers, if they will partake of the Benefits of his Death, to partake of those Symbols that are appointed to represent it. Now there are many Considerations in this Precept to enforce its Obligation upon us. As,

1. If we consider Christ as our Lord and Master, his Authority over us may challenge Duty and Obedience from us. The Centurion in the Gospel declares, that when he bid any of his Servants go or come, or do this, they immediately did it ; and shall Christ's Servants turn their backs, when he calls them to come to him ; and when he bids them do this in remembrance of him, will any turn a deaf ear, and wilfully neglect it ? Shall ordinary Servants pay a greater Regard to their earthly Masters, than Christ's Servants do to their Master in Heaven ? Let this be far from them ! nor let us give him cause to upbraid us, as he did some of old, *Ye call me Lord and Master, and do not the thing that I command you.*

2. If we consider Christ as our Saviour and Redeemer, common Gratitude may enforce this Obligation, and teach us to do this in remembrance of him, who thought nothing too much to be done and suffer'd for us. He hath restor'd us from Death to Life, by *laying down his own Life for us*, and redeem'd us from the Captivity of Slaves into the glorious Liberty of the Sons of God ; and that *not with such corruptible things as Silver and Gold, but with the Price of his own precious Blood.* And is not this enough for ever to engage us to remember him ?

3. The Easiness of this Command may farther satisfy us not only in the Equity, but Necessity of observing it. All that Christ suffer'd, we should have undergone in our own Persons to Eternity ;

nity; and yet all the requital he expects is only to remember him; and that too at a Divine Banquet or Entertainment at his own Table: And can we forget him, who hath so kindly remembered us? He requires us to pledg him not in his bitter Cup, but in the Cup of Salvation, and to drink the Health of our Souls in the Blood of a crucify'd Saviour; and shall we think this an unreasonable or unnecessary Task? Methinks what was said to *Naaman* in another case is very applicable to this; *My Father, if the Prophet had bid thee to do some great thing to be rid of the Leprosy, wouldst thou not have done it? How much more then, when he saith only, Wash and be clean?* 2 Kings 5. 13. In like manner, if our Saviour had exacted some severe and difficult thing from us, the Sense of his unparallel'd Love might very well oblige us to do it; how much more then when he only bids us to eat and drink at his own Table, and to do this in remembrance of him? Moreover,

4. The Necessity our Souls stand in of this Divine Food, may abundantly convince us of our Necessity to receive it; for this is *that Bread that came down from Heaven*, and can alone nourish and cherish them to eternal Life. The Wants of the Soul are spiritual, and cannot be supply'd by any earthly or common Bread: this indeed may support our Bodies, but our Souls require more divine and heavenly Food; 'tis the Body and Blood of Christ receiv'd by Faith in this Sacrament, that is the proper Food and Nourishment of this spiritual part: for hereby the Pardon of Sin, and all other Benefits of Christ's Passion, which alone can make it happy, are convey'd and consign'd to us.

Lastly, 'Tis by eating the Flesh and drinking the Blood of the Son of God, that we become vitally united to him; and therefore without this there can be no Life in us: for as our natural Life consists in the Union of the Soul and Body, which is preserv'd by our daily Food, so our spiritual Life consists in our Union with Christ, which is maintain'd by this spiritual Nourishment. This is set forth by various Resemblances in Holy Scripture, where he sometimes compares himself to a Vine, and his Followers to the Branches, John 15. *I am the Vine* (saith he) *and ye are the Branches*. As the Branches live in the Vine, by deriving Sap and Nourishment from it, so all true Christians live in and by Christ, by receiving Grace and spiritual Strength from him: And as the Branches cannot live or bear Fruit, except they abide in

in the Vine, no more can we except we abide in him: *He that abideth in me (saith our Saviour) the same bringeth forth much Fruit, but without me ye can do nothing: If a Man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a Branch that is cut off and wither'd, and Men gather it, and cast it into the Fire.* Now 'tis by eating the Flesh and drinking the Blood of Christ, that we are thus ingrafted and united to him; hereby he becomes one with us, and we with him, and so receive constant Supplies of Grace and spiritual Nourishment from him: whereas by withdrawing from the Communion of his Body and Blood, we cut off our selves, we cast away the Bread of Life, and refuse that spiritual Food, which is alone able to sustain us.

Again, to illustrate this Truth farther to us, our Saviour often styles himself the Head, and us his Members: and as the Members cannot live without being united to the Head, no more can we except we are united to Christ. Now 'tis by receiving his Body and Blood in this Sacrament that we become thus united to him; and 'tis by that alone we derive that spiritual Strength from him, by which our Life is maintain'd. All which plainly shew the Necessity of this Holy Sacrament, and how truly our Saviour affirms, that *except we eat the Flesh and drink the Blood of the Son of Man, there is no Life in us.*

To conclude then, if we desire to live a Life of Grace here, or ever hope for a Life of Glory hereafter, we must frequently receive this spiritual Food, and preserve our Union with Christ, by keeping this Communion with him; so shall we, who now feed on him by Faith in this Sacrament, e'er long feast with him for ever in his heavenly Kingdom.

DISCOURSE IV.

Mat. 28. 19. *Go ye therefore and teach all Nations, &c.*

THE Church having in the first Question and Answer taught the Catechumen the Number and Necessity of the Holy Sacraments, which are properly but two, and both generally necessary to Salvation; it proceeds in

K k k k 2

The

The next Question and Answer to instruct him in the Nature of a Sacrament, to teach him what it is; where, according to Christ's Commission to his Apostles, of *teaching all Nations*, it instructs him in all the weighty Matters of Religion, and especially in the Doctrine of the Sacraments, which are the principal Badges of our Christianity, and the Instruments to convey Grace and Salvation to us. This Commission is here given with respect to *all Nations*, Gentiles as well as Jews; which shews that God is no Respector of Persons, but in all Nations he that feareth him and worketh Righteousness is accepted with him. Indeed under the Old Testament this great Privilege was confin'd only to the Jewish Nation, to whom appertain'd the Adoption, the giving of the Law, the Covenant, and the Promises. They were allow'd to hear the Law, and to teach their Children, whereas the whole Race of the Gentiles were excluded from the Instructions and Privileges of the Temple. In Jewry was God known (saith the Psalmist) and his Name was great in Israel. At Salem was his Tabernacle, and his Dwelling-place in Zion: He gave his Statutes unto Jacob, and his Ordinances unto Israel: He hath not dealt so with any Nation, neither have the Heathen the knowledg of his Laws. But Christ has in the Gospel enlarg'd this Commission, and will'd his Apostles to go and teach all Nations; so that now there is neither Jew nor Gentile, Bond or Free, Male or Female, but they are all one in Christ Jesus: that is, all are to be receiv'd into his Church, and to be admitted to the Benefits and Instructions of it.

Accordingly therefore our Church instructs all Children of believing Parents in the Knowledg of all Divine Truths, and particularly of the Nature, End, and Usefulness of the Holy Sacraments; to which end it asks in the next words,

What meanest thou by this word Sacrament? To which the Child is taught to answer,

I mean an outward visible Sign of an inward spiritual Grace, given unto us, ordain'd by Christ himself, as a Means whereby we receive the same, and a Pledg to assure us thereof. Where several things are declar'd necessary to constitute a Sacrament: As,

1. There must be an outward and visible Sign.
2. An inward and spiritual Grace represented by it.
3. It must be given or apply'd to us.
4. It must be ordain'd by Christ himself.
5. It must be ordain'd as a Means to convey Grace.
6. It must be ordain'd as a Pledg or Earnest to assure us thereof.

All

All which being necessary to be known for the right understanding of the Nature and Notion of a Sacrament, must be particularly handled.

1. I say, there is requir'd an outward and visible Sign: for a Sacrament being design'd to bring or keep something in remembrance, there must be some outward Sign to represent it; and being a way of teaching by the Eye, as Preaching is by the Ear, the Sign must be visible, that it may be the better able to effect it. A thing that we see is much more apt to work upon us, than what we hear; and an Object presented to our view leaves deeper Impressions, than what we only receive from the Report of others. "Hence we find that the Picture or Image of a thing doth affect us more than any historical Narration; and the more lively and express the Image is, the more lively Motions doth it stir up within us. For this reason we find God Almighty instructing his People under the Old Testament by visible Signs and Tokens, the better to impress the spiritual Notions upon their Minds by sensible Representations of them. Thus the Sacrament of Circumcision had an outward Sign in the Flesh, to keep it in remembrance; and the Passover had the Paschal Lamb to make it a Feast of Memorials. In like manner our Blessed Saviour instructed his People under the Gospel by visible Signs and Representations; and in the two Sacraments, substituted by him in the room of the former, appointed some outward Symbols in the Celebration of them, viz. Water in the one, and Wine in the other, as we shall see more at large hereafter. So that a Sacrament being intended to instruct by the Eye, requires an outward visible Sign to affect it.

2. To a Sacrament is requir'd an inward and spiritual Grace, without which the outward Sign were but frivolous and insignificant; for if it represented nothing, or as good as nothing, if no spiritual Grace or Good thing were couch'd or contain'd under it, it would be of no use, and not worthy to be retain'd in the Church: whereas the Sacraments being Sacred Rites and Institutions necessary to Salvation, must represent and contain under them some spiritual Grace, that may be helpful to that end.

Thus in the first Sacrament of Circumcision, beside the outward Sign in the Flesh, there was an inward spiritual Grace signify'd by it, to wit, their being in Covenant with God, and becoming his People, as we read, *Gen. 17. 11*. In that other legal Sacrament of the Passover, beside the Paschal Lamb, which was the outward
visible

visible Sign, there was represented under it the Lamb of God; that was slain to take away the Sins of the World, which was the inward spiritual Grace. In like manner in the Sacraments of the New Testament, the outward washing the Body by Water in Baptism, is a sign of the inward washing the Soul from the natural Filth and Pollution of Sin: and our eating and drinking the Bread and Wine in the Lord's Supper, signifies our spiritual feeding on Christ for eternal Life. So that both these have their outward visible Signs to represent an inward spiritual Grace, and so have the two first Requisites of a Sacrament.

3. 'Tis farther requir'd to a Sacrament, that it be *given to us*; that is, that it be duly administer'd and apply'd to us. To the due Administration of it 'tis necessary that it be done by proper Officers, that is, by Persons duly qualify'd and authoriz'd thereunto; without which 'tis utterly void and of none effect: and therefore all baptizing by Women or Persons that have no Commission, is no better than ordinary Bathing; and the Lord's Supper, when administer'd by such, is no better than a common Meal. Again, to make these effectual, they must be duly apply'd as well as administer'd to us; for as the best Medicine is of no use, unless it be apply'd, so neither can a Sacrament be of any avail without a right Use and Application of it.

4. 'Tis necessary to a Sacrament, that it be *ordain'd by Christ himself*; for tho it may be administer'd and apply'd by others by his Authority, yet the Institution of it must be from Christ himself: for Christ being the sole Head and Governor of his Church, he hath the sole Power of prescribing the Word and Sacraments that are to be us'd and administer'd in it. Beside, tho the outward visible Sign be by his Command administer'd to us by Men like our selves, yet the conferring of the inward and spiritual Grace, which gives all the Efficacy, belongs only to Christ himself: and therefore a Sacrament must not be of Man's devising, but of God's appointing; it must be no human Invention, but of divine Institution: so that an outward Sign of inward Grace is not sufficient of it self to make a Sacrament, unless it be ordain'd of Christ, who alone can annex the spiritual Grace, and bestow it upon the Use of it. Accordingly we find the two Sacraments of the Old Testament, Circumcision and the Passover, were of Divine Institution, *Gen. 17. 11. and Exod. 12.*

And the same hath been shew'd of the two Sacraments of the New Testament, Baptism and the Supper of the Lord, both which

which were instituted by Christ himself, and by him order'd to be continu'd in his Church till his second Coming, as we may read *Mat. 28. 19. 1 Cor. 10.*

5. Another Requisite of a Sacrament is, that it be not only ordain'd by Christ, but that it be *ordain'd as a Means to convey Grace*, and a necessary Condition of Salvation. And this distinguishes the Sacraments from other Ecclesiastical Rites and Ceremonies; for these are not requir'd as Means of Grace, and necessary to Salvation, but only as Rules of external Order and Decency; not to beget Faith, but to preserve Unity: whereas the Sacraments are instituted to beget and increase Grace in us. The one enters us into a State of Salvation, and the other helps to continue us in it; for by Baptism we receive the Holy Ghost for the renewing our Natures; and by the Lord's Supper we receive fresh Supplies of Grace from it, for the reforming our Lives: by both we are built up in our Holy Faith, and kept by the Power of God thro Faith unto Salvation. So that these Sacraments are appointed by God as the Means of Grace, and the Instruments of our Happiness, to convey to us the Waters of Life, and to feed our Souls with the Food of Immortality. The Sacraments of the old Law were ordain'd to admit those that receiv'd them into Covenant with God, and intituled them to all the Mercy and Benefit of the Legal Sacrifices; and the Sacraments of the Gospel serve to the like or better Purposes, *viz.* to enter us into Christ's Church, and interest us in all the Merits of his Death and Intercession.

Lastly, 'Tis requir'd to a Sacrament, not only that it be appointed as a *Means of Grace*, but that it be *ordain'd as a Pledg to assure us thereof*. This is requisite to confirm our Faith, and encourage our Obedience, both which are too apt to fail, without some token of Assurance to support them; and therefore our Saviour ordain'd the Holy Sacraments, not only as the Means of Grace, but as Props to our Faith, and Pledges to assure us of the Truth of his Promises: for which reason they are sometimes stil'd *the First Fruits*, sometimes *the Earnest of our purchas'd Possession*. For as the First Fruits serve to ascertain the after Harvest, and an Earnest is given to confirm a Bargain; so the Holy Sacraments are appointed to convey and work Grace in us as the First Fruits and Pledges of our future Glory: by these we tast and see that the Lord is gracious, and have our Hopes in him supported by visible and sensible Representations: *He has sealed*

us (says the Apostle) and given unto us the Earnest of his Spirit; 2 Cor. 1. 22. This he doth by giving us the Holy Sacraments as the Pledges and Assurances of his Love, which are the Signs and Seals of the New Covenant, to confirm us in the Truth of his Promises, and the Immutability of his Counsels.

Thus we see the Nature of a Sacrament, and what is imply'd in the Notion of it. From whence we may learn,

1. To magnify and meditate upon the great Love of God in condescending thus to instruct us by visible Signs and Tokens: he knew how backward we are to learn, and how apt to forget; and therefore he vouchsafes to teach us, not only by the hearing of the Ear, but by the sight of the Eye, presenting to our view some lively Symbols and Representations, the better to imprint his Truths on our Mind, and to preserve the Memory of his Goodness. The Holy Sacraments are visible ways of Instruction to help the slowness of our Understanding, and to enable us to receive and retain the Knowledge of God. Herein he is pleas'd graciously to comply with our Weakness, and by the most likely and lively means to instil his Grace and Truth into us, appointing Water to purify us in Baptism, and Wine to remember him in the Lord's Supper. This is an Act of his fatherly Care and Tenderness of us, and shews how willing he is that we should know and remember the things which belong to our Peace, which therefore ought to be thankfully acknowledg'd and accepted by us.

2. From what has been said of the Nature, we may satisfy ourselves in the Number of the Sacraments; for all the foremention'd Requisites of a Sacrament are to be found in those two, of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, and in no other: and therefore there can be no reason of multiplying or adding more to them, as some have done; for Matrimony, Orders, Penance, and the like, are not requir'd of all, nor are they generally necessary as Means of Salvation, or as Pledges to assure us thereof; and therefore want many Requisites to denominate them truly and properly Sacraments. Much less may the Rites and Ceremonies of the Church be stil'd by that Name (as others have vainly objected) for these are neither ordain'd by Christ, nor do they convey Grace, nor are they us'd as any Pledges or Assurances of it, but are only human Institutions appointed for the decency and solemnity of Divine Worship.

Indeed,

Indeed, this word Sacrament is no where to be found in Holy Scripture, and therefore we cannot derive the Sense or Notion of it from Divine Authority; 'tis a Term taken up and us'd by the Church, to express some peculiar Signs and Institutions, which we find appointed by God as the Means of Grace, and an Earnest to assure us of it. This then being the Sense which the Church hath put upon this Word, nothing is to be reckon'd of a Sacramental Nature, that wants any of those Qualifications: and this will not only confine the Notion of a Sacrament to those two mention'd in the Catechism, but cut off all the supernumerary Sacraments added by the Church of *Rome*; and likewise vindicate our Church from the false Imputation of Sectaries, as if she took the Rites and Ceremonies of the Church into that Number.

Lastly, From what has been said concerning the meaning of this word Sacrament, we may learn to preserve a due Reverence and pious Esteem of the two Sacraments of the New Testament, receiving them as Pledges of the Divine Love, and the Earnest of our future Happiness. Let us beware of denying or delaying of Baptism, which enters us into Christ's Church; nor let us neglect the Lord's Supper, which leads us on to his Holy Table: but being both ordain'd by Christ himself, let us live in a due Observance and Estimation of them; and thus by using them as the Means of Grace now, they will e'er long bring us to Glory.

DISCOURSE V.

Mat. 28. 19. Go ye and teach all Nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

I Have, according to the Direction of the Catechism, and the Commission of the Text, taught you the Nature, the Necessity, and the Number of the Holy Sacraments; and shew'd what is requir'd to the making and receiving of them as such.

The next Question is, *How many Parts be there in a Sacrament?*

To which the Answer is, *Two, the outward Visible Sign, and the inward Spiritual Grace.* Both which being explain'd in the foregoing Discourse, will need no farther Explication: And therefore having spoken of the Sacraments in general, and the Parts of

them, I proceed now to discourse more particularly of each of them.

To which end, the next thing ask'd in the Catechism is, *What is the outward visible Sign or Form in Baptism?*

The Answer whereunto is, *Water, wherein the Person is baptiz'd in the Name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.*

Here we are directed to begin with Baptism, which being the Sacrament of Admission into the Church, must be first taught and learnt by us. In order to which 'tis enquir'd, First, What is the outward visible Sign in Baptism? and that is, *Water*. And, Secondly, What is the Form us'd in it? and that is, *In the Name of the Father, of the Son, and the Holy Ghost*. Of both which I shall treat from these words of our Saviour, *Go, teach all Nations, baptizing them, &c.* Where, Baptizing being a washing with Water, signifies to us, That the outward visible Sign of this Sacrament, is the Element of Water, which is by Christ ordain'd and consecrated to this purpose. Indeed, Water hath such a natural Faculty of cleansing, as renders it a fit Symbol of Purification; and has accordingly been us'd in all Ages and Countries to that end: hence we read of *several kinds of Washings* in use among the Jews, *Heb. 9. 36.* They never admitted any Proselytes without this Ceremony: The Priests and Levites were not to enter upon their Office, till they were sanctified by the washing with Water, *Exod. 29. 4.* If any Uncleaness had come upon a Man under the Law, either by touching a dead Corps, or by Leprosy, or any other way, he was commanded to wash in pure Water, and was thereby judged clean. The *Israelites* were said to be baptiz'd in the Sea, *1 Cor. 10.* *Naaman the Syrian* was bid to go and wash in *Jordan* to be cleansed of his Leprosy: And the blind Man was order'd to wash in the Pool of *Siloam*, that he might be healed. Water then, by reason of its natural property of Cleansing, is an Emblem of Purity, and hath been ever used by all Nations in the Rites of their Religion: Our Saviour therefore, who never affected any needless Innovations, thought fit to continue this as the Rite of Initiation into his Church. Accordingly we find *John the Baptist*, in compliance with this antient Practice, baptized with Water in the River *Jordan*, where Christ himself came to his Baptism, and thereby left an Example of his own Institution. By all which it plainly appears how fitly our Church declares Water to be the outward visible Sign in this Sacrament.

But

But how is Water to be us'd in the celebrating of this Sacrament? This must be spoken to, because we find some difference about the manner of applying this Element; some require the dipping of the baptized Person, and washing him all over, in imitation of *John the Baptist*, who plung'd all those that came to him in the River *Jordan*; others think the sprinkling of Water sufficient, and the washing of one Part may serve for the whole.

But this being only a Mode or Circumstance of this Duty, consideration may be had of the different Climates and Customs of Countrys; and likewise of the different Strength or Weakness of the baptized Parties. Indeed, in those hotter Countrys where Bathing was commonly us'd, it is more than probable that this Sacred Rite was perform'd by dipping or plunging the whole Body in Water. Thus *John the Baptist* living in those warmer Regions at the first Institution of Baptism, plung'd his Disciples: But yet even in those Places this was not thought absolutely necessary to Baptism, for Clinicks, and other infirm and diseased Persons were then allow'd to be sprinkled, and the Fathers generally own this for a lawful Baptism. And therefore in the more northern and colder Climates, where Infants especially in the Winter Season could not without imminent Danger be thus plung'd in cold Water, the Prudence and Charity of the Church admitted them into it by sprinkling: And because God hath declar'd that he will have Mercy and not Sacrifice, this Indulgence to tender Infants is continued in those colder Countries to this day. Sutable whereunto our Church, according to the antient Practice, first recommends Immersion or Dipping, where Strength will bear; but yet allowing of Sprinkling to the weakness of Children, this hath prevail'd above the other, and is become the common Practice indeed.

The words βαπτίζω and βαπτίζω in the Original signify both, and may be apply'd as well to Sprinkling as Dipping. And the Practice of the Apostles and Primitive Christians extended to both: for tho they who were baptiz'd in *Jordan* and *Enon* were receiv'd by dipping, yet we read of whole Families baptiz'd in their own Houses; and particularly of the Jaylor and all his Household baptiz'd at home, and at Midnight too; which could not well be but by Sprinkling, as we read *Acts* 16. 32, 33. And 'tis probable that the Three thousand Converts baptiz'd upon *St. Peter's* Sermon the same day, and in the Place where they were assembled, were receiv'd into the Church the same way; for if it

had been otherwise, it would have requir'd another Place, and a longer Time. However that be, 'tis certain that 'tis not the quantity of Water in Baptism, no more than the quantity of Wine in the Lord's Supper, but the Holy Spirit of God that gives all the Virtue and Efficacy to both; and therefore imploring that, we need not raise any Doubts or Disputes about either.

In short then, to clear up this Matter, we must distinguish between what is necessary and essential to Baptism, and what is only accidental or circumstantial to it: For the former, the Element of Water, the Form of Words in the Administration, and Persons duly qualify'd and authoriz'd thereunto, are made necessary to this Sacrament by the Command of our Saviour, which things must therefore be constantly observ'd and kept to in the Celebration of it.

But for the latter, to wit, the Quantity of Water, and the Manner of using it, whether by applying Water to the Person by Sprinkling, or the Person to the Water by Dipping, these things being under no Command, nor any where determin'd in Holy Scripture, are left indifferent; and if we do not urge the one as necessary to the excluding of the other, Baptism may be lawfully and effectually perform'd by either.

Pass we then from the outward visible Sign in Baptism, which is Water, to the Form of Words to be us'd in the Administration of it; and that both our Text and Catechism tells, must be *in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost*.

Now to baptize in the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, may imply in it these two or three things.

1. That we baptize by the Commission and Authority of these three Persons.
2. That we baptize into the Faith of the three Persons of the Trinity. Or,
3. That we confirm our Baptism by the Witness of these three Persons. A word or two of each. And,

1. I say, To baptize in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, is to baptize by the Authority and Commission of the three Persons in the ever-blessed Trinity: for so the Commission given in our Text expressly runs; *Go, baptize all Nations in the Name of the Father, Son, &c.* Which Commission was first given to the Apostles by Christ himself, and in them to all their Successors, with whom he promis'd to be to the end of the World. And as this requires and authorizes them so to do,

do, so doth it forbid all others from meddling with it; for the Command, to Go and Baptize all Nations, is join'd with the Office of Preaching or Teaching all Nations: So that none may presume to baptize, but such as have Authority to preach; and none but lawful Ministers have any Authority to do either. And therefore (as a Learned Author tells us) the Church of old forbade all Women to baptize; the Council of *Carthage* did the same: And *Epiphanius* accounted it ridiculous in *Marcion* and his Followers, to permit Women to do that Office. Sutable hereunto, our Church allows no Midwives to baptize, but confines this Office to lawfully ordain'd and authoriz'd Ministers, chusing rather to leave Infants in cases of Necessity to the Mercy of God, than to violate and transgress his own Commission. Baptism then being thus ordain'd by the Son of God, and consecrated by his Holy Spirit, may and ought to be solemniz'd in the Name of the whole Trinity.

2. To baptize in the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, is to baptize in the belief of the three Persons in the Holy Trinity, and shews that they own their Faith in each: by this Form is signify'd our Reception into that Church, which is distinguish'd from Jews, Turks, and Infidels, by believing three Persons and one God. Upon this Article of the Trinity all the Christian Religion is founded; and therefore upon our entrance on Christianity, we are baptiz'd into this Faith, and by this Form us'd in it, are taught ever after to profess and adhere to it; and therefore *St. Ambrose* tells us, that when Persons of riper Years came to be baptiz'd, they were ask'd three times in the belief of the three Persons in the Holy Trinity; and were put into the Water first when they profess their Belief in the Father, and again when they profess their Belief in the Son, and the third time upon their Belief in the Holy Ghost. This is that Trine Immersion of which we read so often in the antient Fathers, which tho wisely enough us'd upon the Authority and Practice of the Church, yet may not be urg'd as necessary, when under no Command.

3. To baptize in the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, is to call in the three Persons of the Holy Trinity, as Witnesses of our being baptiz'd in the Belief of them; this is intimated to us by *St. John*, in *1 John* 5. 7. *There are Three that bear Record in Heaven, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and these Three are One.* Now this Record is not only to ascertain to us
the

the Truth of the Holy Trinity, but to secure our Faith in it, and to aggravate our Infidelity if we apostatize from it.

Thus we see both the outward visible Sign, and Form in Baptism, together with the Manner of applying the one, and the Reason of using the other. I shall conclude both with an Inference or two from each. And,

1. If Water be the only outward and visible Sign appointed by our Saviour in this Sacrament, then we see upon what slender ground all other Additions to it stand. There is a certain Church in the world, that hath clog'd this Institution of Christ with many other cumberfom and uncommanded Signs, adding Oil, Cream and Spittle, as necessary and significant Rites in the Administration of it. Had Christ instituted no outward Sign in this Ordinance, he might be suppos'd to have left it to the Appointment of the Church; but having taken such particular care to assign the washing with Water, as the fittest Ceremony to represent the inward cleansing, it must be great Presumption either to alter or to add to it; for this is in some measure to exalt our selves above our Saviour, and to teach for Doctrines the Commandments of Men. St. *Austin* tells us of one *Seleucus*, who baptiz'd with branding with an hot Iron, from a gross Abuse of that Prediction of our Saviour, *He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with Fire*; where Fire is to be taken for that outward Appearance of the Holy Ghost, who came down on the Apostles in the Form of Fire; or if it be any thing distinct from it, can be meant only of that Fervency of Spirit, with which he inspir'd them: So that this is a gross perverting of Holy Scripture, and all other Additions that are made necessary and essential to this Ordinance, are no better.

2. From what has been said concerning the applying of the outward visible Sign of Water in this Sacrament, either by dipping or sprinkling, both which are included in the word *Baptizing*, and have been promiscuously us'd, according to the different Climates and Customs of several Countries; we may learn the gross Error and Superstition of the Anabaptists, who require Dipping as the only necessary and effectual way of administering this Sacrament, and decry all other Baptisms as invalid, that are not perform'd in this way: which Error they have been unhappily led into, partly by not knowing the true Sense and Meaning of the word *Baptizing*, partly by their Ignorance of the antient and modern Use of it in the several Ages of the Church; but chiefly

ly by the cunning Craftiness of Deceivers, who have instill'd these false Notions into them, to serve some other purposes: whereas 'tis not so much the Quantity of Water, or the outward washing of the Body, as the inward purifying of the Soul, that renders it effectual: So St. Peter tells us, That *Baptism now saves us, not by the washing of Water, but by the Answer of a good Conscience towards God.*

Lastly, From what hath been said concerning the Form of Administration in the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, we may learn strictly to observe and keep to it. This is so expressly requir'd in the Institution of this Sacrament, that all have been branded for Hereticks, who have departed or vary'd from it. We read of *Dionysius* a *Carthusian* Monk, who baptiz'd in the Name of the Lord God; and of *Theophranius* and *Eutyches*, who baptiz'd in the Death of Christ; and of *Valentinus* an ancient Heretick, who baptiz'd in the Name of the unknown God, and of the Truth the Mother of us all. But these and the like Baptisms have been judg'd invalid, as wanting a necessary and essential part of Christ's Institution, and the Parties censur'd for Apostates from the Faith, that us'd or countenanc'd them. But generally the Form here prescrib'd by our blessed Saviour, hath every where obtain'd in the Christian Church; which should teach us firmly to adhere to it, without any Addition to or Alteration from it.

DISCOURSE VI.

Rom. 6. 4. *Therefore we are bury'd with him by Baptism into Death, that like as Christ was rais'd from the Dead by the Glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in Newness of Life.*

HAVING seen the outward visible Sign or Form in Baptism, viz. *Water, wherein the Person is baptiz'd in the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost*; I proceed to the inward spiritual Grace, signify'd or represented by it, which in general is the washing or cleansing of the Soul from all Impurities. This is the Subject of the

Next

Next Question, wherein 'tis ask'd, *What is the inward and spiritual Grace?* The

Answer whereunto is, *A Death unto Sin, and a new Birth unto Righteousness: for being by Nature born in Sin and the Children of Wrath, we are hereby made the Children of Grace.* Of which I shall treat from these words of the Apostle; *We are bury'd with him by Baptism into Death, that like as Christ was rais'd from the dead, so we also should walk in Newness of Life.* Where we may observe,

First, The two great Benefits and Privileges of Baptism, viz. *A Death unto Sin*, in those words, *We are bury'd with him by Baptism into Death*; and *a new Birth unto Righteousness*, in those, *That like as Christ was rais'd from the dead by the Glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in Newness of Life.*

Secondly, We have the Illustration or Confirmation of both, partly from the Misery of our natural state, in those words; *for being by Nature born in Sin, and the Children of Wrath*: partly from the Happiness of the State to which Baptism translates us, in those, *We are hereby made the Children of Grace.* Of which particularly, beginning with the

First Branch of this inward and spiritual Grace, viz. *A Death unto Sin*, express'd in the Text, by being *bury'd with Christ by Baptism into Death*: where the Apostle alludes to the antient Custom of plunging the baptiz'd Party over head and ears in the Water, whereby being a while cover'd over and lost in that Element, he seem'd to be dead and bury'd in it: This he calls a being *bury'd with Christ by Baptism*; and in the next verse, being *planted together in the likeness of his Death*; that like as Christ was swallow'd up of Death, and bury'd in the Earth, so they were overwhelm'd in Baptism, and bury'd in the Water. This Immersion was design'd to represent not only the Death of Christ, which he underwent for our Sins, but likewise our dying unto Sin, and bidding adieu to it: and therefore antiently they who were baptiz'd, were wont to put off their Garments, to signify the putting off the Body of Sin, and were a while cover'd over and bury'd in the Water, to signify their being dead to it; which is our being bury'd with Christ by Baptism into Death, not a natural Death, consisting in the Separation of the Soul from the Body, nor such a spiritual Death as consists in the Separation of the Soul from God, but such a one as denotes the Separation of the Soul from Sin, the killing and mortifying all corrupt Desires and Inclinations, and the for-

forfaking of all evil Courses. *How shall we that are dead to Sin (saith the Apostle) live any longer therein? Know ye not that as many as were baptiz'd into Christ, were baptiz'd into his Death? Of this Death unto Sin we find frequent mention in the Holy Scripture; the Promise and Practice whereof was so well known in the primitive Times, that the Apostle speaks of it as a thing firmly assented to and acknowledg'd by all Christians: Knowing this (saith he) that the old Man is crucify'd with him, that the Body of Sin might be destroy'd, that henceforth we should not serve Sin; for he that is dead is freed from Sin, ver. 6, 7. All which plainly declare the Design of Baptism to be the killing of Sin in us, and destroying the Power and Dominion of it, that it may no longer reign in our mortal Bodies. Hereby we are made conformable to Christ's Death, by dying unto Sin, for which he died, and burying all our Iniquities in his Grave.*

2. The other Branch of this inward and spiritual Grace, is a new Birth unto Righteousness, represented in the Text by Christ's Resurrection, *That like as he was rais'd from the dead by the Glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in Newness of Life: and as we are planted in the likeness of his Death, so are we in the likeness of his Resurrection.* This is farther set forth by the antient Practice of Dipping or Plunging the baptiz'd Party, where as his being put under the Water signify'd his being dead and bury'd unto Sin, so his rising again out of it, betoken'd his rising to a new State, and walking in Newness of Life. Hence our blessed Saviour hath made this the Sacrament of our new Birth, telling us, that *except we are born again of Water and the Spirit, we cannot enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.* St. Paul stiles it the *Laver of Regeneration*, and joins to it the *Renewing of the Holy Ghost*, Tit. 3. 5. signifying, that the Holy Spirit is confer'd in Baptism for the Renovation of our Nature, to qualify us for that new State we then enter upon, and to enable us to perform the Duties that belong to, and we undertake in it; this is fitly represented by Water, which is of a healing and cleansing Nature, and purifies from all Pollution. That this Privilege is confer'd in Baptism, the Holy Scripture is express: *Be baptiz'd (saith St. Peter) in the Name of Christ, and ye shall receive the Holy Ghost, Acts 2. 38. We are baptiz'd (saith St. Paul) into one Body, and made to drink of the same Spirit, 1 Cor. 12. 13.* We find a Promise in Ezekiel, that God would in the latter days *sprinkle clean Water upon them, and they should be clean from all their Filthiness, and then a new Heart would be*

give them, and put a new Spirit within them, Ezek. 36. 25, 26. That this Promise was accordingly fulfil'd, the Writings of the New Testament may abundantly satisfy us; where we read not only of many miraculous Gifts bestow'd in Baptism for the Edification of the Church, but likewise of many Graces confer'd on Christians, for the sanctifying and renewing their Natures, by which they are said to be regenerated and born again, that old things pass away, and all things become new. This is the receiv'd Doctrine of the Catholick Church, both antient and modern, that the Waters of Baptism wash away the Guilt and Pollution of Sin; that the pouring of it out in that Sacrament is accompany'd with the Effusion of the Holy Ghost, and that a real Change is thereby wrought by the Influence of the Divine Spirit.

If it be here ask'd, How then comes it to pass, that all who are baptiz'd are not undoubtedly sav'd, since those great and salutary Effects accompany that Ordinance? In answer to which I say,

That this proceeds not from any want of Efficacy in this Sacrament, nor from the Insufficiency of Divine Grace confer'd in it; but from mens not performing the Promises and Conditions engag'd in it: for Baptism being a Covenant, hath Duties and Conditions as well as Benefits and Blessings annex to it; and they that will have the one, must perform the other. The inward spiritual Grace of Baptism is not so absolutely and inseparably annex to the outward Rite and Performance of it, but that it may be forfeited and lost by not observing the Conditions promis'd and requir'd in it; and this is the unhappy case of too many nominal Christians, who give up their Names to Christ, and take his Name upon them, and yet afterward desert him, flying to the Enemies they renounc'd, and breaking the Articles of their baptismal Covenant; whereby they lose all the Grace and Favor promis'd and bestow'd in it. Some fall back to the Works of the Devil, which they promis'd to forsake; others are led away by the Vanities and Allurements of the World, which they solemnly renounc'd; others again yield themselves up to the Power and Dominion of their Lusts, from which they engag'd to abstain: All which, by violating the most sacred and solemn Vows, justly forfeit all the Grace and Mercy of Baptism, and fall into all the Miseries of a Heathen state; for that which *saves us in Baptism, is not* (as St. Peter tells us) *the outward washing of Water, but the Answer of a good Conscience towards God, that in Simplicity and godly*

Sin-

Sincerity we have had our Conversation. But this will be more fully discours'd of in the next.

Secondly, 'Tis by Baptism then that we are regenerated or new-born, thereby becoming dead unto Sin, and living unto Righteousness; which things are farther illustrated and confirm'd in the next words of the Catechism: *For being by Nature born in Sin, and the Children of Wrath, we are hereby made the Children of Grace.* Where we have,

1. The Misery of that state in which we are born: And,
2. The Happiness of that to which we are translated by being baptiz'd.

1. We are said to be born in Sin, and thereby the Children of Wrath. This, however deny'd by some Hereticks, hath ever been acknowledg'd and bewail'd by the best of Men: David confesses that he was shapen in Wickedness, and in Sin did his Mother conceive him, Psal. 51. 5. St. Paul felt a Law in his Members warring against the Law of his Mind, and leading him captive to the Law of Sin and Death, Rom. 7. which made him cry out, *O wretched Man that I am, who shall deliver me from this Body of Sin!* And we all find those Seeds of Sin rooted in our Nature, that incline us too strongly to all manner of Evil. This Root of Bitterness sprang from the Stock of our first Parents, which corrupted the whole Race of Mankind, and deriv'd the Contagion to all their Posterity: So that we are become the Children of Wrath by being the Children of Disobedience; liable to the just Indignation and Vengeance of our heavenly Father, and obnoxious to all the Punishments due both to our original and actual Transgressions. This is the wretched and miserable State in which we are all born into the World, which may well enough make us enter into it crying, and take possession of it with our Tears.

But God Almighty in pity and compassion to our Souls, hath help'd us out of this forlorn Condition; he hath taken us into the Ark of his Church, to save us from Shipwrack and Destruction; he hath given us a new Birth to preserve us from the Miseries of the old, for thereby the old Man is bury'd, and the new Man is rais'd up in us. And this leads us to consider,

2. That happy State to which we are by Baptism translated, in which we are said to be made the Children of Grace; that is, from Children of Wrath and Heirs of Damnation, we become Children of God and Heirs to his heavenly Kingdom: insomuch that

we who had alienated our selves from God. and forfeited his Favor, are hereby brought home to him, and restor'd again to his especial Care and Affection. We are made the Children of Grace,

1. By being taken as Children into his Family, admitted into his Church, and made Members of his mystical Body ; which is a signal Favor to those who were before Strangers and Enemies unto him by evil Works : *We are all baptiz'd* (saith St. Paul) *by one Spirit into one Body*, 1 Cor. 12. 13. And *as many as have been baptiz'd into Christ, have put on Christ*, Gal. 3. 27. that is, have put on the Relation of Children, and are receiv'd into his Grace and Favor.

2. As Children of Grace we receive the Remission of Sin : *Arise and be baptiz'd* (saith St. Peter) *for the Remission of Sin*. Our original Guilt is wash'd away in that Laver of Regeneration, and we are secur'd upon easy terms of a Pardon for all actual Transgressions.

Lastly, As Children of Grace we are intitled to an Inheritance in the Kingdom of Glory ; so St. Peter assures us, that we are hereby begotten again unto a lively Hope of an Inheritance incorruptible, undefil'd, and that fadeth not away, reserv'd in Heaven for us, 1 Pet. 1. 3, 4. 'Tis the expresse Promise of our Saviour, *He that believeth and is baptiz'd shall be sav'd*, Mark 16. 16. The saving of Noah and his Family in the Flood, was a Type of our Salvation by Baptism ; where as they who were taken into the Ark escap'd that universal Deluge that drown'd the corrupt part of Mankind, so they who are receiv'd into Christ's Church shall be sav'd from the common Destruction that shall betide the wicked World. Again, the *Israelites* safe Passage thro the Red Sea, that overwhelm'd the *Egyptians*, is a farther Figure of this Salvation ; where the Waters that drown'd the latter, prov'd only a Wall of Defence and Protection to the former : In like manner the Waters of Baptism now save us by the washing of Regeneration ; and being consecrated and us'd to this divine and holy purpose, preserve us from perishing by them.

Thus we see both the outward visible Sign and Form in Baptism, and likewise the inward spiritual Grace signify'd and represented by it ; both which may give us to understand,

1. The inestimable Benefits and Privileges of Baptism, which rescues us from the Miseries of our natural State, and restores us to a State of Salvation, making us from Children of Wrath, to become the Children of God : And this it does by that inward
spiritual

spiritual Grace, by which we become dead unto Sin and bury'd with him in Baptism, and alive unto Righteousness, walking before him in Newness of Life ; which should make us ever mindful of, and desirous to attain these blessed Effects of this holy Ordinance.

2. Since this spiritual Grace is not only signify'd by, but annext to the outward Sign, it may teach us carefully to use the one in order to the other. Our blessed Saviour hath appointed the outward washing with Water, as a means of purifying the inward Man ; and therefore we must not omit the former, if we have any hopes of obtaining the latter. This is the external Rite instituted to represent and convey this Grace to us, and 'twill be our Interest as well as Duty not to neglect the Sign and Seal that secures it to us.

To conclude, This Discourse may teach us not to slight or omit (as some Sectaries do) this holy and beneficial Ordinance: for if Christ himself hath ordain'd it as a means of conveying Grace and Mercy to us, 'twill be a vain Presumption to alledg or hope that we may be sav'd without it.

DISCOURSE VII.

Acts 2. 38. Then Peter said unto them, Repent and be baptiz'd everyone of you in the Name of Jesus Christ, for the Remission of Sins. Together with

Acts 8. 37. And Philip said, If thou believest with all thy heart, thou mayst be baptiz'd.

HAVING spoken to the outward visible Sign and Form in Baptism, and likewise of the inward spiritual Grace represented by it, and thereby set before you the great Benefit and Blessings promis'd and convey'd by that Sacrament ; I proceed to the next Inquiry of the Catechism, which is into the Duties and Conditions requir'd in order to the obtaining of those Blessings, in these words :

What is requir'd of them that are to be baptiz'd ?

To which the Answer is, *Repentance, whereby they forsake Sin ; and Faith, whereby they stedfastly believe the Promises of God made*
to

to them in that Sacrament. Where Repentance and Faith are made the two Conditions or Qualifications of Baptism, both which must be therefore particularly handled, beginning

First with Repentance ; of which I shall treat briefly from these words, *Repent and be baptiz'd every one of you for the Remission of Sins.* The words are part of that famous and successful Sermon of St. Peter to the Jews, wherein after he had from the Excellency of Christ's Doctrine and Miracles confirm'd the Truth of his Messiahship, he proceeds to upbraid them for their barbarous and ungrateful Carriage towards him, charging them with the Guilt of crucifying the Son of God, and putting to death the Lord of Life : which he did with that Smartness and Vigor, that gall'd their Minds and awaken'd their Consciences. For in the Verse before the Text, we read that upon hearing his Discourse they were prick'd at the Heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the Apostles, *What shall we do ?* St. Peter, who had made the Wound, prescribes the Remedy ; willing them, by the Tears of Repentance and the Waters of Baptism, to wash away their Sin : *And he said unto them, Repent and be baptiz'd every one of you for the Remission of Sins.* In speaking to which words I must,

First, Inquire into the Nature of Repentance : And,

Secondly, Shew it to be a necessary Condition of Baptism.

For the Nature of Repentance, 'tis in short a turning from Sin unto God : where is implied a double Act, viz. A turning from Sin, and a turning unto God. I stile it a turning from Sin, not indeed intirely and totally from the Act and Commission of it, for that our present State will not admit of, the best of us falling several times a day, and in many things we offend all ; but from the Love and Delight in it, and as far as may be from the Practice and Continuance of it. This is express'd in Scripture sometimes by *eschewing and abhorring of Evil*, sometimes by *fleeing from and forsaking of Sin*, sometimes by *denying Ungodliness and worldly Lusts*, and the like ; all which shew that the Bent and Inclination of the Mind is to be set against Evil : And tho we may fall sometimes by Inadvertence, Surprise, and the Importunity of Temptation, yet we are to rise again by Repentance, and recover our selves by imploring the Assistance of Divine Grace. So that this Act of Repentance, whereby we forsake Sin, includes in it,

1. A hearty Sorrow for past Offences : And,

2. Firm Purposes and Resolutions of future Amendment.

1. I say, Repentance includes in it a hearty Sorrow for all past Offences. This is that Compunction of Spirit, or pricking at the Heart, mention'd in the foregoing Verse, whereby the Jews, upon St. Peter's displaying to them the Heinousness of their Guilt, were struck with Grief and Remorse for what they had done, and cry'd out in the anguish and bitterness of their Souls for Directions what to do. This St. Paul stiles *a godly Sorrow, that worketh Repentance not to be repented of*. This is necessary to the turning away from Sin, for none can repent of that for which he is not sorry, nor will any turn from a thing that is not grievous and irksom to him.

But a bare Sorrow for Sin, or an Uneasiness under it, is not of it self sufficient to true Repentance, without firm Purposes and Resolutions of Amendment; for the greatest Sinners many times feel an Uneasiness after their Commission of Sin, and are frequently asham'd and sorry for what they have done: but if this be not attended with an inward hatred and forsaking of Sin, it will but aggravate the Guilt and increase the Condemnation. And therefore the Psalmist tells us, that his Heart was set against Evil, and that he was stedfastly purpos'd to keep God's righteous Judgments. To make our Repentance thorow and sound, we must bid adieu to our Sins, and abandon our Iniquities: *Let the wicked forsake his Ways, and the unrighteous Man his Thoughts*, saith the Prophet Isaiah, chap. 58. And this must extend to all Sin in general, not sparing our peculiar and beloved Vice, but *bating the very Garment spotted with the Flesh, and avoiding all the Appearance of Evil*.

Lastly, We are so to turn from Sin, as never to return to it any more. This is imply'd in renouncing the Devil, the World, and the Flesh, together with all the Works and Temptations of each; which being treated of at large in the first Part, I shall not need to add any more here, but refer you thither. But beside this first Act of turning from Sin, there is,

2. Another Act of Repentance, which is the turning unto God. This is the positive and indeed the principal Branch of this Virtue; for 'tis not enough to cease to do Evil, but we must learn to do well. 'Tis but half our Duty to refrain from Sin; to make it intire, we must add the doing of Good: hence we are commanded not only to *abhor that which is evil, but to cleave to that which is good*, Rom. 12. And to *denying Ungodliness and worldly Lusts, to add living righteously, soberly and godly in this present World*,

Tit.

Tit. 2. 12. Because God is the Author and Fountain of all Good, to turn to him is to turn to all Good; to *add one Vertue to another*, and to be daily *growing in Grace, and in the Knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ*. For this reason we are often call'd upon to *turn unto the Lord*, if we have gone astray, to *return to him*, and to *cleave unto him with full purpose of Heart*. And this is to be done not now and then, by fits and starts, but always, even to the end. We are so to turn to God, as to keep with him, and never to forsake him, and then he has promis'd never to leave or forsake us.

This is briefly the Nature of Repentance, which is here made a necessary Condition of Baptism; which is the

Next thing to be spoken to: And this is so plainly laid down, not only in our Catechism, but the Holy Scripture, that I shall not need to insist much upon it: *Repent and be baptiz'd* (saith St. Peter) where Repentance is the Term upon which this Sacred Rite is to be administer'd. This is evident not only from the Doctrine of John the Baptist, whose Baptism was administer'd with the Confession of Sin, call'd therefore *the Baptism of Repentance*, and was accompany'd with an Exhortation to *bring forth Fruits meet for Repentance*; but likewise from the Practice of the Christian Church, in which Repentance always preceded Baptism, and was made a necessary Preparative to, and Condition of it; which Condition was immediately and personally requir'd of those that were capable of performing it, and mediately by others, of those that were not, as we shall see after.

Having shew'd the first Requisite of Baptism, *viz.* Repentance, whereby we forsake Sin; let us go on to the second, *viz.* *Faith*, whereby we *steadfastly believe the Promises of God made in that Sacrament*. Where I must,

First, Explain to you the Nature of Faith, what it is; and,

Secondly, Shew it to be a necessary Requisite and Condition of Baptism. For the Nature of Faith,

In general, it is a firm Belief or Persuasion of the Truth of God's Word; that all the Doctrine deliver'd by him, or dictated by his Holy Spirit, is undoubtedly true; and that the Holy Scriptures are the infallible Oracles of God, and contain the Words of eternal Life.

More particularly, the Faith here requir'd is a firm Belief or Persuasion of that part of God's Word which contains his gracious

cious Promises, and the Tenders of his Mercy and Salvation, and especially those that are sign'd and seal'd to us in Baptism; for the Catechism describes it to be such a Faith, whereby we *stedfastly believe the Promises of God made to us in that Sacrament.*

What those Promises are, hath been shew'd before, viz. *the Remission of Sins, the Gift of the Holy Ghost*; God's taking us into Covenant with himself, whereby he becomes to us a Father, and we to him as Sons; His taking care of us in this World, and providing an Inheritance for us in the next; in order to which, he gives us his Grace to enable us to do our Duty, and to persevere in it unto the end: These are the great and invaluable Blessings promis'd and confer'd in Baptism. Now because without Faith it is impossible to please God or profit our selves, the Faith here requir'd implies,

1. A stedfast Belief or firm Assent to the Truth of these Promises. Without this we make God a Lyar, and take him for such a false or impotent Being, that is not to be rely'd on: for this reason it is, that Infidelity or Unbelief stands condemn'd in the Gospel, as the greatest of Sins, because it calls in question either the Power or the Truth and Faithfulness of God, and in effect robs him of the Glory of all his Attributes: which things, as they carry with them the greatest Guilt, so will they draw after them the sorest Punishment. To prevent this, we are stedfastly to believe the Promises of God, not wavering in Doubts, or fluctuating in Uncertainties, but relying upon them as an Anchor of the Soul sure and stedfast. 'Tis recorded to the Honor of *Abraham*, that he *stagger'd not thro Unbelief, but was strong in Faith, giving Glory to God*: meaning, that he stedfastly believ'd the Promises of God made in the New Covenant, and never departed from a firm and unshaken Assent to the Truth of them. And this is the first Branch of a true and saving Faith.

2. This Faith implies not only a firm Assent of the Mind to the Truth of the Promises, but a suitable Consent of the Will and Affections to love and embrace them, and to lead our Lives in the hopes and by the influence of them. For Baptism being a Covenant, hath Duties to be perform'd on our part, as well as Privileges promis'd on God's; and as Faith teaches us to believe the one, so doth it lead us likewise to the Practice of the other. This the Apostle stiles a *Faith that works by Love*; and tells us that *Faith without such Works is dead, being alone*; and can neither an-

swer the Ends of Baptism, nor procure to us the Benefits of it. And this will lead us in the

Next place to shew that such a Faith is a necessary Requisite and Condition of Baptism; for so our Saviour himself hath made it, Mark 16. 16. *He that believeth and is baptiz'd shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned.* Where he declares Faith to be a necessary Concomitant of Baptism, to render it effectual to Salvation; and where 'tis wanting, the outward Rite can neither save or secure us from Damnation. According to which Doctrine Philip told the Eunuch, *That if he believ'd with all his heart he might be baptiz'd*; and upon his saying, *I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God*, was receiv'd to Baptism. The Jaylor, in the Acts of the Apostles, made a Confession of his Sins and a Profession of his Faith, before he and his Household were baptiz'd, Acts 16. 30. Sutable whereunto the Christian Church hath ever requir'd of adult or grown Persons the Rehearsal of the Creed before Baptism; and for others of tender years, their Undertakers in their Name declar'd their stedfast belief of it, before they were admitted to this Ordinance: Which Custom, in conformity to the Rules and Practice of the Catholick Church, continues with us to this day.

Thus I have briefly consider'd the two great Conditions or Qualifications of Baptism, Repentance and Faith; both which we see are expressly requir'd, to make it available to those Ends for which it was ordain'd.

All that remains is to press you to a due Observance and Practice of them: And,

1. Let all that are baptiz'd call to mind that Promise of Repentance they made in it, and lead their Lives in a due sense of and conformity to it: This was the Condition upon which you were admitted into the Number of Christ's Disciples; be not then unmindful of it, nor walk contrary to it. You promis'd to forsake Sin, and how can you then live any longer therein? You solemnly renounc'd the Devil, and what have you now to do with any of his Works? You bid defiance to the World, with all the Poms and Vanities of it, and how can you listen or be led away by any of its Temptations? You engag'd to mortify the Flesh, with its Affections and Lusts, and how come you to be so easily betray'd and misled by them? Remember that you were wash'd with the Waters of Baptism, and had your Soul cleans'd from all Impurities in that sacred Laver of Regeneration.

Do

Third Part of the Church-Catechism. 643

Do not then return with the Dog to his Vomit, and the Sow that was wash'd to her wallowing in the Mire: Do not forget such solemn Engagements, which will bring on you the heavy Guilt of perjur'd Persons and Renegadoes; but rather walk as becometh your Profession, and bring forth Fruits meet for Repentance.

2. Let all baptiz'd Persons be ever mindful likewise of that other Condition of Baptism, and firmly adhere to that Faith which they profess'd to own and receive in it. You solemnly promis'd, at your entrance upon Christianity, to believe all the Articles of the Christian Faith, and to continue stedfast in that Faith to your Lives end: Do not then turn Apostates or Revolters from it, but stand firm to it against all the Attempts and Opposition of Deceivers; this is the Apostle's Advice, *Heb. 10. 23. Having our Bodies wash'd with pure Water, let us hold fast the Profession of our Faith without wavering.* This is more especially to be minded in this corrupt and degenerate Age, in which most of the Articles of the Creed are deny'd or derided. Indeed never were more or greater Shipwracks made of the Christian Faith, than in our unhappy days. Have we not some that call in question the Doctrine of the Holy Trinity, and instead of renouncing the Devil and all his Works, renounce the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, in whose Name they were baptiz'd? Are there not others who laugh at a crucify'd Saviour, and deny the very Lord that bought them? Do not some make a mock of the Resurrection and future Judgment, saying with the Scoffers of old, *Where is the Promise of his Coming?* 'Tis therefore high time to call to mind our Baptismal Vow, to remember what we promis'd in it, and to endeavour to preserve the Christian Faith, which is in so great danger of being lost.

3 m m m m

DISCOURSE VIII.

Acts 16. 33. latter part, *And was baptiz'd, he and all his, straitway.*

WE have consider'd Baptism as a Covenant, wherein as there are many Blessings and Privileges promis'd on God's part, so there are many Duties and Conditions to be perform'd on ours: both which are by outward Signs and Seals ratify'd and confirm'd to us.

The next Question is concerning the Persons to be admitted into this Covenant, and particularly whether Infants, who know nothing of the Nature, End, or Obligations of it, are capable of being receiv'd into it.

The Inquiry is in these words, *Why then are Infants baptiz'd, when by reason of their tender Age they cannot perform this?* To which the Answer is,

Because they promise them both by their Sureties, which Promise when they come to age themselves are bound to perform. Where we have,

First, Infant-Baptism plainly suppos'd: And,

Secondly, The Objection taken from their Inability of performing the Conditions answer'd: *Because they promise both by Sureties; which Promise being in their Name, and for their Good, when they come to riper years, themselves are bound to perform.*

First then, the Question why Infants are baptiz'd, manifestly implies that they are and ought to be so; which being oppos'd by an upstart and obstinate Sect among us, will require to be a little clear'd and confirm'd to us: and this I shall do from these words, *He was baptiz'd and all his straitway.* The words are spoken of the Jaylor, who having Paul and Silas his close Prisoners, felt at midnight a great Earthquake, which shak'd both the House and himself, and open'd at once the Prison-Doors and the Keeper's Heart. From this trembling of the Earth, he concluded his Prisoners to be some Divine Persons, and therefore *came trembling to them, saying, Sirs, what must I do to be saved?* They reply'd to him, *Believe on the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved and thine House.* Upon the Profession of which Faith, *he was baptiz'd and all his straitway*; where Children and Servants being reckon'd as the Parent's Goods, are included here in *all his*, and were indeed

the only things of his that could be baptiz'd with him. The same is affirm'd of *Crispus, a Ruler of the Synagogue*, who believing in the Lord Jesus with all his House, were all admitted to Baptism, *Acts 18. 8.* Beside which we read of many other Families, as *Gaius* and *Stephanas*, who with their whole Households were baptiz'd, *1 Cor. 1. 16.* where Children being generally a part, and no small one too in most Families, may be well enough suppos'd to have been baptiz'd with their Parents; tho these only as the Heads of the Family are particularly nam'd, yet the others may and have been reckon'd to be included in the whole Households. However, if none of these Families had any Children, which is absurd to imagine, yet Infants being a part of all Nations, whom the Apostles were sent to baptize, must undoubtedly be within the Commission. Moreover, our blessed Saviour's causing the Children to be brought to him, his checking those that would have kept them from him, his taking them up in his Arms, laying his hands upon them and blessing them, solemnly declaring that theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven, plainly shew them capable of being in Covenant with God, and therefore they may very well receive the Seal of it.

Furthermore, the Holy Scriptures manifestly include Children within the Promise of Mercy and Salvation, saying, *The Promise is to you and your Children*; who are therefore said to be *holy*, by a relative and federal Holiness: and consequently may not be deny'd Admission into the Holy Catholick Church.

But the Argument taken from Circumcision is very strong and concluding for Infant Baptism; for if Infants were receiv'd into the Church by Circumcision under the Law, they may and ought to be receiv'd into it by Baptism under the Gospel.

That Infants were of old admitted by Circumcision, is evident by that express Law given to *Abraham*, requiring every Male Child to be circumcis'd the eighth day, *Gen. 17.* And the general Practice of the Jews was according to it.

The Force of the Consequence is, from Baptism's succeeding in the room of Circumcision: And as this was the Rite of Initiation into the Jewish, so is the former into the Christian Church. Our Saviour made no Alteration as to the Time or Age of those that were to be receiv'd into this Sacred Society; he only chang'd the painful and bloody Rite of Circumcising into the more mild and gentle one of Washing, but left all other things as they were: so that as Children were admitted before, so were they to be still.

Indeed

Indeed our Saviour may not be so properly said to institute, as to continue this Rite of Baptism under the Gospel; for even under the Law, beside Circumcision, Profelytes and Females were admitted by Washing. Now Christ, to make his Yoke easier and his Burden lighter than 'twas before, was pleas'd to lay aside the one, and to continue the other.

Moreover, as Circumcision was a discriminating Sign to distinguish the People of the Jews from all other Nations under Heaven, so is Baptism now the distinguishing Mark or Badg to difference Christians from all other Persons. And this must extend to Persons of all Ages and Sexes, Children as well as Men, *Male and Female, for they are all one in Jesus Christ.* Otherwise we shall make the Mercy of the Gospel far less than that under the Law, and the Christian Church much straiter than that of the Jews: For if we exclude Infants out of the Pale of the Church, into which they admitted them, we shall make the Gate narrower and the Number less than 'twas before; whereas Christ hath not straitned, but enlarg'd his Bowels; he hath widen'd the Gates of his Church, and made it more capacious, receiving all Nations into it, and all the Members of them that come to him. So that if Infants were admitted by the old Dispensation, we may safely conclude, they are not excluded by the new.

But against this the Anabaptist objects, That there is no express Command in Scripture for Infant-Baptism: The Jews were indeed requir'd to circumcise their Children, but shew us (say they) any one Text in the Bible that says, Let Infants be baptized. This is the main Objection of that Sect, by which many ignorant Persons are drawn and deluded into it.

Now if this had any Force, it would exclude all Females both from Baptism and the Lord's Supper; for 'tis no where expressly said that Children or Women should be admitted to either: whereas the Commission to baptize all Nations, and the Command, *Drink ye all of this*, is sufficient to warrant their Admission to both.

As for Children, God Almighty had fully declar'd his mind in the Old Testament for taking them into Covenant by Circumcision, *Gen. 17.* and *Deut. 29. 10, 11, 12.* And the same is declar'd and repeated over again in the New Testament, by saying, *Your Children are holy, and the Promise is to you and your Children*; and what need was there of any farther Declaration in this matter? Beside,

The

The custom of Baptizing as well as Circumcising, was well known and practis'd in the Jewish Church at and before our Saviour's coming ; for when any of the Gentiles became Profelytes, both they and their Children were first circumcis'd, and then washed in token of their cleansing from the filth of their former Heathenism: so that Baptism ever accompany'd the Circumcision in profelyting of the Heathens even to our Saviour's Time ; and when our Lord enter'd upon his Prophetick Office of teaching the World, he only laid aside the severer Ordinance of Circumcision, and retain'd the easier Ordinance of Baptism, as best futed to the mildness and clemency of the Gospel-State.

But Infants (say they) are not particularly nam'd by our Saviour in the Institution of this Ordinance, which alone could give them any Title to it. Now the Answer to this is easy and obvious, *viz.* that there was no need or occasion for it ; for what need was there for our Saviour to declare, that the Seal of the Covenant should be apply'd to them, when 'twas never deny'd them ? What need he bid them to initiate Infants when 'twas never otherwise ?

Indeed, if Infants had never had the Seal of the Covenant apply'd to them, it had been not only expedient, but necessary that our Saviour should have particularly nam'd them, and thereby declar'd his Intention of enlarging his Mercy and Favour to them ; but Infants being ever included in it, and the Seal of the Promise being always apply'd to them, there could be no reason for giving them a new Title to what they were instated in before, or making particular mention of them who always enjoy'd it.

Yea, had Christ design'd that Children should not be any longer receiv'd into the Church, it had been necessary by an express Order to exclude them : for they having a former Grant of being admitted into Covenant, and being in actual possession of the Sign and Seal of it, there was a necessity of an express and direct Command to deprive them of it ; and our Saviour must have declar'd, that whereas Children were formerly receiv'd into the Covenant by Circumcision, he now order'd the contrary, and would have none admitted into the Church by Baptism but grown Persons, who understand the Nature and End of it. But this being never done, yea, being inconsistent with the Mercy of the Gospel, which was rather to enlarge than straiten Favours, we may safely conclude that 'twas his Will to continue this Mercy to them ; and none can without great Injustice and Cruelty deny it to them.

Fur-

Furthermore, tho Infants are not exprelly nam'd, yet they are plainly imply'd in the Commission of baptizing all Nations; for since the Universal includes all Particulars, and Children make up a very considerable part of all Nations, the words of the Commission may be reasonably suppos'd to comprize them. Yea, our Saviour's Words, *Suffer the little Children to come unto me, and forbid them not*, with the Reason annext, *for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven*, amounts to little less than an exprels Command for baptizing them; for the first step of coming unto Christ is by Baptism, neither can they have any Title to the Kingdom of Heaven without it: Our Saviour himself declaring, *That except ye are born again of Water and the Spirit, ye cannot enter the Kingdom of God*. So that to exclude Children from Baptism, is to exclude them from Salvation, and to shut them out of the Kingdom of Heaven, which Christ exprelsly saith is theirs.

But here the Opposers of Infant Baptism farther object, That Teaching in the Commission goes before Baptizing, for the words are, *Go, teach all Nations, baptizing, &c.* And therefore since Infants are not capable of Teaching, they may not be admitted to Baptism. In answer to which, I say;

1. That 'tis bad arguing from the order of words, or to infer from thence the necessary order and dependence of things, for these are many times promiscuously us'd in Holy Scripture: If St. *Matthem* puts Teaching before Baptizing, St. *Mark* puts Baptizing before Teaching, *Mark* 1. 4. So that this may serve either way, and therefore can conclude for neither.

2. The word μαθητεύσατε rendred, *Teach all Nations*, does not signify the actual Teaching, but the making of Disciples, the entering them into Christ's School, or making them Members of his Church, and thereby putting them in a capacity of being taught afterwards: and therefore we find the word διδάσκοντες, which signifies the actual Teaching or Instructing of Disciples, in the Commission to follow after Baptizing, in the next Verse, *Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you*, Mat. 28. 19, 20.

3. When Christ gave this Commission to his Apostles, he sent them to convert rude and barbarous Nations to Christianity; and these being *Strangers to the Covenant of Promise, without God and without Christ in the World*, were first to be taught and instructed in the Mysteries of Religion, before they could be admitted into Christ's Church, which was the reason of putting Teaching before

fore Baptizing: But when any of these became Profelytes, and embrac'd the Christian Faith, their Children were baptized with them; *The Promise* (as the Apostle declares) *being to them and their Children, and to as many as the Lord our God shall call.* And these being receiv'd into the Church by the Faith of their Parents, were taught afterward the Knowledg of that Religion, into which they had the favour to be baptiz'd.

Accordingly we read, that tho *Abraham* was first taught, and then circumcis'd, yet by his being in Covenant, *Isaac* his Son was first circumcis'd, and then taught; and this was all along allow'd to the Children of Jewish Profelytes, who were ever receiv'd into Covenant, and afterward taught the meaning of it: Which Custom our Blessed Saviour, who often enlarg'd but never lessen'd Favours, not only approv'd of, but continued in the Christian Church. So that still if any that are Jews, Turks, or Infidels, desire to be admitted into it, they are first to be taught and instructed in the Mysteries of the Christian Religion, and then be receiv'd to Baptism: and being so, their Children have a right of admission to it, and must after learn and observe the Conditions of it. So that the Sense of our Saviour's Words is plainly this, Teach them that are capable of Teaching, and baptize them that are capable of Baptizing.

But if any Doubt arise in this Matter, the Practice of the Catholick Church hereupon may be justly reputed the best Interpreter: And here we shall find the baptizing of Infants, by uninterrupted Tradition and Practice, deriv'd down to us through every Age; the antient Constitutions of the Church expressly require it. The Fathers generally practis'd and enjoin'd it: Yea, *St. Cyprian*, with a Council of 66 Bishops, determin'd, that Infants had a better Right to Baptism, than elder Persons. The Council of *Milevis* pronounc'd an Anathema aginst all Persons who deny'd Baptism to Infants for the Remission of Sins. All Antiquity affirms, that the Apostles taught the baptizing of Children: And this has been the universal Practice of the Church in all Times and Places ever since; which Custom obtains still every where, save with a giddy upstart Sect, who have been unhappily misled into the contrary Persuasion, by the cunning Craftiness of some who lie in wait to deceive.

But the greatest Objection against Infant-Baptism is yet behind, taken from their Incapacity of promising or performing the Conditions of it; which being the main Thing intended in

O o o o

this

this Question and Answer, must be more fully handled in the next.

In the mean time, we may learn hence the sinfulness of neglecting this Holy Ordinance, confirm'd by the Command of Christ, the Example of his Apostles, and the Practice of the whole Catholick Church: And likewise the danger of depriving Infants of this gracious Institution, so beneficial to them, so comfortable to their Parents, and so great a Security to Religion it self, and all that enter upon it.

DISCOURSE IX.

Mark 16. 16. *He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be damned.*

HAVING from this and other Places of Scripture, prov'd Faith and Repentance to be the necessary Conditions of Baptism, the next Question was, *How Infants come to be baptiz'd, when by reason of their tender Age they cannot perform this?* This is indeed the Grand Objection of the Anabaptists, who affirm Infants incapable of Baptism, because they are incapable of promising and performing the Conditions requir'd in it.

To this the Answer of the Catechism is, That tho they cannot engage these things for themselves, yet *they promise them both by their Sureties; which Promise, when they come to Age, themselves are bound to perform.* Where for the better explaining the Words, both of our Text and Catechism, 'twill be necessary to shew,

First, What that Faith is which is necessary to go before Baptism, and is made a Condition of it.

Secondly, That Infants are reckon'd in the Number of the Faithful, by the Faith of their Parents.

Thirdly, That Infants may and do promise the Conditions of Baptism by their Sureties, who present and undertake for them.

Fourthly, That this Promise made by others in their behalf, does after lie upon themselves to perform.

These things rightly understood, will be sufficient to solve and remove this Difficulty. To which end I must enquire,

First,

First, What that Faith is which is made a necessary Condition of Baptism; for our Blessed Saviour here puts Believing before Baptizing, and makes both the necessary Requisites to Salvation; He that believeth (says He) and is baptized, shall be saved: Where Believing is made a Qualification to Baptism, and by that for Salvation. So that to deny to all Infants all sorts of Faith, is to exclude them from Salvation, and to doom them (if they die before they come to years of Discretion) to Eternal Damnation: for without Faith 'tis impossible to please God; and he that believeth not shall be damned.

To clear then this Point, we must distinguish between an Actual and Potential Faith, that is between a Faith that may be presently exercis'd, and a Faith that is only in the Power, and may come into Act after. For as Children may be stil'd rational Creatures as soon as they are born, tho they have not the use or actual exercise of Reason at that Age, because they have the Principle of Reason within them, which may appear after; even so may Children be said to have some sort of Faith, tho it do not presently shew it self, because they have the Root of it within them, from whence it may afterward spring. Now adult or grown Persons, both Jews and Gentiles, of whom our Saviour speaks, were actually to believe and declare their Faith in Christ before they were to be baptiz'd; and therefore we read, that before Philip would baptize the Eunuch, he ask'd him whether he did believe with all his heart? And upon his Answer, that he believ'd Jesus to be the Son of God, he immediately baptiz'd him, *Acts* 8. 37. From which Instance the Church ever after exacted from all grown Persons an actual profession of their Faith before Baptism, and made every baptiz'd Party, if of Age, to repeat the whole Creed. But when these new Converts had imbrac'd and own'd the Christian Faith, and so were receiv'd to Baptism, their Children, to whom the Promise likewise extended, were admitted to it without this actual Exercise of their Faith: Which being unable to do in their tender Years, they were to learn and declare it afterwards; for God is not so hard a Master, as either to exclude Infants of believing Parents from the Method of Salvation, or exact that from them which they are unable to perform. And therefore these words of our Saviour, that mention Believing before Baptism, are to be understood only of grown Persons converted from Judaism or Heathenism to Christianity, who were

both able and requir'd to make a Profession of their Faith, into which they desir'd to be baptiz'd; but are not to be interpreted to bar Infants, who are neither able nor requir'd to make it. For as those words of the Apostle, *If any will not work, let him not eat*, exact indeed Work and Labour from all able and grown Persons in order to their Maintenance; yet may not be construed to starve Children, because they cannot work: so those words of our Saviour, *He that believeth, and is baptiz'd, shall be sav'd*, require an actual Faith before Baptism, in those that are of Years and Ability to exercise it, but do not exclude Infants of the Benefit of it, before they are of Age to perform it. But,

Secondly, Tho Infants are incapable of exercising an Actual Faith, yet they are in Scripture reckon'd in the number of the Faithful by the Faith of their Parents. For as the Seed of *Abraham* under the Old Dispensation, were taken into the Covenant by the Faith of their Father *Abraham*, in whom all the Nations of the World were promis'd to be blest: so the Apostle assures us that under the New Testament, the Promise is still to them and their Children, and to as many as the Lord our God shall call; who are therefore stil'd, *an Holy Nation, a Royal Priesthood, a Chosen Generation*, by descending from their Loins: and being so, they have undoubtedly a Right to the Seal of the Covenant, now as well as ever, by their descent from them. We know Children, by the Charters and Grants of Princes, are intituled to many temporal Favours and Privileges in Right of their Parents. If a Father be free of any Town or Corporation, the Son is so too, and is by Birth intituled to the Privileges of a Freeman: *I was free born* (says *St. Paul*) and thereby he claim'd the Privileges of a *Roman*; and may not a Child born of Christian Parents, as well claim the Privileges of a Christian, especially when the Grant is made to them? Must Spiritual Favours be more restrain'd than Temporal? Is Christ's Charter to his Church to be made narrower, than a Prince's Charter to a Corporation? Or are Children less capable of Spiritual, than of Temporal Immunities? Certainly, Christ's Bowels of Mercy and Kindness are not to be thought straiter than those of Princes: and if the merciful Grants of earthly Kings are extended to Infants, sure the Commission granted by Christ for the discipling all Nations, must be suppos'd much more to include them. Neither may this be deny'd to the Issue of believing Parents, to whom the Promise is made, who

†

must

must be therefore in a better Condition than the Off-spring of Heathens. As for Faith and Repentance, the two Conditions of Baptism, I say,

Thirdly, That tho Infants cannot ingage these in their own Persons, yet they may and do promise them both by their Sureties who undertake for them.

Concerning the Lawfulness, Use and Benefit of these Sureties, enough hath been said in the first Part; all that need to be added here is, to shew the Ingagement of these Sureties in the behalf of Infants, to be sufficient to qualify them for the Grace of Baptism. To which end two things must be here clear'd and consider'd by us.

1. That Children are capable of the Benefits of the Covenant. And,

2. That Sureties have been ever allow'd them, to render them capable of these Benefits.

1. That Infants are capable of the Benefits of the Covenant, their Reception into it by God's especial Order and Appointment is a sufficient Evidence; for we find him declaring unto *Abraham*, Gen. 17. 7. *I will establish my Covenant between thee and me, and thy Seed after thee in their Generations, for an Everlasting Covenant, to be a God unto thee and thy Seed after thee.* And lest this Seed of his should be interpreted only of grown Persons descended from him, 'tis expressly order'd, ver. 10, 11, 12. That Infants of *Eight days old* should be taken into the Covenant, and receive *Circumcision as the Seal and Token of it.* Neither hath the Gospel restrain'd this Favour by excluding Infants, but enlarg'd it rather to *all Nations*, and the *Children of as many as the Lord our God shall call.* 'Tis well known, that Children are capable of having any thing convey'd and seal'd to them, upon Conditions to be perform'd; they may have a beneficial Grant or Lease made to them, and a Child may be crown'd in the Cradle: And if these temporal Blessings appertain to them, why should spiritual Favours, of which they stand in greater need, be deny'd to them?

Now the three great Benefits of the Covenant, are Remission of Sin, Regenerating Grace, and a Title to the Kingdom of Heaven; of all which Children must be suppos'd capable, unless we will exclude them from all hopes of Salvation. For the first, If Children are capable of Guilt, which they derive from our first Parents, they must of Remission too, or else their Condition is hard.

hard and remediless. We know as the Infant Son of a Traitor may have his Blood tainted, and thereby lose all Right to his Father's Lands ; so by the Mercy and Pardon of the Prince, may the Attainder be remov'd, and he restor'd to the forfeited Inheritance of his Father : In like manner, as the Guilt of *Adam's* Transgression is entail'd upon his Posterity, by which Infants are born in Sin, and the Children of Wrath ; so by the Mercy of God may this Guilt be remitted to them, and they receiv'd again into Grace and Favor.

As for regenerating Grace, that is both promis'd and confer'd upon them, who *are sav'd by the washing of Water, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost*. To deny Infants this new Birth of Water and the Spirit, is to deny them all Entrance into the Kingdom of Heaven ; which not only betrays great lack of Charity, but expressly contradicts the Words of our Saviour, who tells us that *theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven*. Children then are capable of spiritual as well as temporal Favors. But yet,

2. Because of their tender Years and Inability to promise or perform the Conditions of them, they have ever been allow'd Sureties and Undertakers for both, to render them capable of them. All Nations allow Children Guardians to contract for them in temporal matters, which Contracts being for their behoof and benefit, are good in Law, and bind them as firm as if they were their own Act ; so that Children may be bound by Deeds drawn up and seal'd by others in their behalf, before they understand any thing of it : Yea, in Construction of Law, that is reckon'd an Act of the Pupil or Minor, that is done in his name or for his good by his Tutor or Guardian. In like manner, the Mercy of God and the Church hath allow'd Infants Sureties or spiritual Guardians to contract for them in spiritual Matters, and to do that for them for the good of their Souls, which they cannot do for themselves ; which Contract being made in their name and for their good, is look'd upon and accepted by God as their Act. And therefore,

Lastly, As they receive the Benefit of this Promise made in their behalf, so does it lie upon them to perform and fulfil the Conditions of it. A Minor cannot retract that when he comes of Age which was engag'd for him by his Guardians in the time of his Infancy, but stands oblig'd to make good what was promis'd for him, if it appear to be for his welfare and benefit. If he receive a Lease or Gift upon certain terms engag'd by others in his stead, he

he must perform the Conditions or forfeit all Title to it. Children are receiv'd into the Covenant by the Promise of these Sureties, and have Grace confer'd upon them on the Conditions of Faith and Repentance to be perform'd by them when they become able. These then lie upon them to perform, or else they justly lose all the Benefit and Privileges of this Ordinance: for tho the Favor of God and the Church dispense with these Conditions whilst they remain impossible, yet both exact them from them as soon as they become possible, and are able to perform them; insomuch that if they fail of them when they come of Age, they prove false to their Engagements, and may be properly said to break a Vow and Covenant if they sin against them. In short then, as no Incapacity debar'd Infants of old of the Benefit of Circumcision, so neither may it exclude them now from the Advantages of Baptism; the Mercy of the Gospel being greater and wider than that of the Law, and the Promises and Conditions of the Covenant being the same in both.

Thus we see upon what firm ground the Doctrine of Infant-Baptism stands, being supported by the Command of God under the Old Testament, by the Encouragement and Practice of Christ and his Apostles under the New, by the Custom and Constitution of the Christian Church ever since.

I shall conclude this Point with an Inference or two by way of Application: And,

1. We learn hence the great Love of God to tender Infants, in taking them so early into Covenant with himself, being to them a Father, and they to him as Children: And because they cannot engage for themselves what is necessary to bring them into this happy state, he is graciously pleas'd to accept the Engagement of others in their stead; fulfilling his part of the Covenant presently, by extending his Grace and Favor to them, and expecting the performance of theirs when they are able. This is an Instance of his fatherly Care and Tenderneſs to these helpless Babes; which is a great Security to them, and may afford no small Comfort to their Parents, whether they live or die.

2. We learn hence the Danger of omitting or refusing this Ordinance, which is to reject the Kindness of Heaven to Babes and Sucklings, and to deprive them of the ordinary Way and Means of Salvation. We read how *Moses* was threatned with Death, and like to be destroy'd by an Angel for omitting to circumcise his Child; which made *Zipporah* perform it in an unusual

way.

way to prevent the Danger, throwing the Foreskin in his face, and saying, *A bloody Husband art thou to me because of the Circumcision*, that is, for neglecting of it. And if so great a Punishment attended the Breach of this Command under the Law, of how much sorer Punishment shall they be thought worthy, who neglect this more easy Institution of the Gospel? Wherefore let none slight this Holy Ordinance, or refuse to bring their Children to it, when they are so lovingly call'd and invited to it, nor go about to straiten those Bowels of Mercy that yearn towards them, but rather thankfully accept those Tenders of God's Love to poor Infants, and dedicate them betimes to him who hath promis'd to receive them.

DISCOURSE X.

1 Cor. 11. 24. latter part, *This do in remembrance of me.*

HAVING shew'd the Nature and Necessity of Baptism, the first Sacrament of the New Testament, by which we are enter'd into the Christian Church, and admitted to all the Benefits and Privileges of it; I proceed now to that

Other Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, by which we are continu'd and confirm'd in it. To this we are led by the next Question in the Catechism, which asks,

Why was the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper ordain'd?

The Answer whereunto is, *For the continual Remembrance of the Sacrifice of the Death of Christ, and the Benefits we receive thereby.* Of which I shall treat from these words, *Do this in remembrance of me*: where we have,

1. The Institution of this Holy Sacrament, *Do this*; which the foregoing words shew to be the celebrating of the Lord's Supper.
2. We have the great End and Design of it, which was in remembrance of our Saviour.

Of the Institution and Necessity of this Sacrament, we have spoken already: That which is here enquir'd into, and comes now to be handled, is the End and Design for which it was instituted, viz. *for the continual Remembrance of the Sacrifice of the Death of Christ, and the Benefits we receive thereby.* In treating whereof
with

with relation both to the Text and the Catechism, it will be necessary to shew,

First, That the Death of Christ was truly a Sacrifice.

Secondly, That this ought to be had in continual Remembrance.

Thirdly, That the Benefits accruing by it, ought not to be forgotten.

And *Lastly*, That the observing of this Sacrament of the Lord's Supper is the best means of preserving the Memory of both. Of each of these something distinctly. And,

First, The Catechism and the Text suppose the Death of Christ to be truly and properly a Sacrifice. A Sacrifice, in its proper Notion, is the offering up something unto God by way of Atonement and Satisfaction for another. Thus all the Sacrifices under the Law consisted in the substituting or slaying something in the room or for the rescue of another. Now to a perfect Sacrifice three or four things were absolutely necessary, all which eminently concur'd in the Sacrifice of the Death of Christ. As first it was necessary that the thing offer'd up should be pure, sound, and unblemish'd; for so we read Lev. 22. 20. *Whatsoever hath a Blemish, that shall ye not offer, for it shall not be accepted for you. It was not to be blind or broken, scurvy or scabby, but perfect, sound and intire, without Wen, or natural Imperfection, as we read in the following Verses. Accordingly the Paschal Lamb, which was a Type of this great propitiatory Sacrifice, was to be without Blemish and without Spot. Now this pure and spotless Innocence was eminently found in the Sacrifice of the Death of Christ, for he was perfectly free from all natural and moral Blemishes: He did no Sin (saith the Apostle) nor was any Guile found in his mouth: And therefore the same Apostle tells us, That we were not redeem'd with such corruptible things as Silver and Gold, but with the precious Blood of Christ, as of a Lamb without Blemish and without Spot. That this was necessary to his being a full, perfect, and all-sufficient Sacrifice, is evident, because had he been a Sinner himself, he had deserv'd Death on his own score, and the utmost Effect of his Sacrifice had been only the Expiation of his own Guilt; neither would it have been possible for him to ransom the forfeited Lives of others, if by his own Sin he had forfeited his own to Divine Justice. And therefore such a High Priest became us, who was holy, harmless, and undefiled, separate from Sinners, and made higher*

P P P P

than

than the Heavens, who needed not first to offer Sacrifice for his own Sins; as we read Heb. 7. 26, 27.

2. 'Twas farther requir'd to a perfect Sacrifice, that the Thing offer'd should be of Value or Worth enough to make Compensation for the Punishment due to the Offender; for else it could neither answer the End, nor secure the Authority of the Law: And herein the Imperfection of all the legal Sacrifices was chiefly seen, that what was offer'd in them came far short of the Guilt for which they were offer'd; for they only substituted the Life of a Beast in the room of the Life of a Man, between which there is no proportion: And therefore the Apostle declares, That 'twas impossible for the Blood of Bulls or of Goats to do away Sin; their Death being not of sufficient Value to atone for the Sin and Punishment due to Man.

But the Death of Christ, who was God as well as Man, had an infinite Worth and Value in it; his Life was worth all the World, and his Death had Merit enough to atone for the Sins of all Mankind.

3. Another thing requir'd to a proper Sacrifice, was to be free and voluntary: Hence we find it commanded, Lev. 1. 3. That he that offers any Sacrifice, should do it of his own voluntary Will, at the door of the Tabernacle of the Congregation. It was not to be forc'd or extorted, but to come freely from the Offerer, who being sensible of his Guilt, and obnoxious to Punishment, should be ever ready and willing to make Expiation. This Property likewise was eminently found in the Sacrifice of Christ's Death: for tho he were perfectly innocent himself, and so could not, consider'd as such, deserve to be punish'd upon his own score; yet having freely taken our Sin upon him, and voluntarily undertook to be our Surety, he might and did freely suffer. He had the disposal of his own Life, having power to lay it down, and likewise to take it up: so himself declares John 10. 18. *No Man taketh my Life from me, but I lay it down of my self*; which he did as a Ransom for many.

Lastly, To compleat the Sacrifice, 'twas necessary that what was offer'd should be admitted and receiv'd in the stead of the Offender; without which it could have no effect towards the Expiation of his Sin, or removing the Punishment due to it: For the Law requiring that he that sins should suffer, another's suffering can be of no avail, unless it be accepted as an Atonement of the Offender's Guilt. This was likewise found in the Death of Christ; for

for tho God might justly exact the Punishment of Sin from the Persons that committed it, yet he was graciously pleas'd to admit of a Surety to suffer in their stead : And as God the Son gave his Life a Ransom for many, so did God the Father accept of it as a sufficient Expiation ; which made the Death of Christ a proper and perfect Sacrifice. From whence I proceed to shew,

Secondly, That this Sacrifice of the Death of Christ ought to be had in continual remembrance, which is the Sense of these words of our Saviour, *Do this in Remembrance of me.* Indeed all great and worthy Actions are to be kept in remembrance, especially those that signally promote the Good and Welfare of Mankind. The Psalmist tells us, that *God Almighty hath so done his wonderful Works, that they ought to be had in remembrance,* Psal. 111. The Lives and Deaths of publick Benefactors to Mankind have been ever recorded with Honor, and the Memory of them transmitted to future Generations : And if the noble Acts of Patriots and Preservers of our Country have been thus remember'd with Renown, how much more ought the Saviour of the World to be had in everlasting Remembrance ? This is what he not only deserves, but desires here of all his Followers, that they would remember him when he was gone, and not forget the great things that he hath done and suffer'd for them. We find the Jews were commanded to preserve the Memory of their signal Deliverance out of Egypt ; and a Day of Memorials was appointed to keep in mind the destroying Angel's passing over the Houses of the *Israelites*, when the *Egyptians* were all smitten with the Pestilence, *Exod. 12.* And if these temporal Mercies and Deliverances were thought worthy to be remember'd to all Generations ; sure an eternal Deliverance from the Powers of Death and Hell will deserve a more lasting Memorial. The Blood sprinkled on the Doors of the *Israelites*, is not half so memorable and medicinal, as the Blood of Christ shed and sprinkled on our Souls : The former only sav'd their Bodies from the Plague, whereas the latter saves our Souls from eternal Destruction. And what Monument can be great enough to preserve the Memory of so eminent a Blessing ? If any should redeem our Bodies from Bondage or Captivity, or rescue our Lives from imminent Death and Danger, we could not but think our selves for ever oblig'd to remember it ; and might justly be branded for Monsters of Ingratitude, if we forgot such remarkable Acts of Kindness. Why, Christ hath ran-

form'd our Souls from a worse than *Egyptian* Bondage or *Turkish* Slavery: He hath saved our Life from Death, and by shedding his own Blood hath preserv'd ours: And are these things to be forgotten by us? Will not such Love constrain us to remember him, and not to suffer such memorable Acts of Kindness to sink into Oblivion? Indeed 'tis but a slender Requital of his inestimable Love only to remember it, and to keep in mind those bitter Sufferings of his for our sake, which we should have for ever endur'd in our own Persons. And since this is all he calls for, we must be prodigiously ungrateful to deny him this, when we receive so many great and invaluable Benefits by it. And this will lead us to shew,

Thirdly, That not only the *Sacrifice of the Death of Christ*, but the *Benefits we receive thereby* are to be minded and remember'd by us. What these Benefits are, the Catechism will after declare: In the mean time I shall here mention two, that are common to this with the other Sacrament; and they are Remission of Sins, and Reconciliation with our Maker, both which are convey'd and begun in Baptism, and after confirm'd and compleated in the Lord's Supper.

For the Remission of Sins, the Holy Scripture frequently informs us, that as Christ died for our Sins, so is the Pardon of them sign'd and seal'd to us in this Sacrament: so our Saviour here expressly declares, that *his Blood was shed for many for the Remission of Sins*. Because *Death was the Wages of Sin*, and without *shedding of Blood there is no Remission*; therefore our Saviour as our Surety was content to die and shed his Blood for us, that he might be our all-sufficient Sacrifice and Atonement. And when Sin, the only Makebate between God and us, is remov'd, then are we receiv'd into Favor, and reconcil'd unto him, both which are effected by this Sacrifice, and are remember'd in this Sacrament; for our Sins are bury'd in his Grave, and *we that were afar off, are brought nigh by the Blood of his Cross*. These are memorable and unrequitable Mercies, and therefore ought to be had in continual remembrance; which is the great Business and Design of this Sacrament. And this will lead us to the

Last Thing propounded, viz. That receiving the Holy Sacrament of the Lord's Supper is the best means of preserving the Memory of Christ's Death, and conveying to us the Merit and Benefits

Benefits thereof. It hath been observ'd in all Ages, that the Memory of any Person or Thing is by no way better preserv'd, than by Feasts and Festival Solemnities: Hence we find that God Almighty appointed the Feast of the Passover, to keep in mind the *Israelites* Deliverance out of *Egypt*, as also the destroying Angel's passing over the Houses of the *Israelites*, when he slew all the First-born of the *Egyptians*, and their passing safe thro the Red Sea, which drown'd *Pharaoh* and all his Host: This Feast they were commanded to keep every Year, to preserve the Memory of these remarkable Mercies. They were to eat the Paschal Lamb with bitter Herbs, in memory of their hard Bondage in *Egypt*, which made their Lives bitter to them: And likewise with unleavened Bread, in token of that Bread of Affliction with which they were there fed; and by this the distinguishing Love of God to them was had in continual remembrance. Sutable hereunto we find the *Grecians*, *Romans*, and other Nations instituted Feasts and Festival Solemnities to preserve the Memory of their Heroes; at which times they were wont to rehearse their noble Acts in the ears of the People, the better to imprint them in their Minds, and continue the Remembrance of them.

In compliance with this antient and laudable Practice, our blessed Saviour instituted a Feast in memory of himself: and to preserve the Remembrance of his Goodness, he chang'd the Jewish Passover, which continu'd to his time, into the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, to perpetuate his Memory, and preserve the Remembrance of the greatest Deliverance that was ever wrought for the Sons of Men; for all other Deliverances were only from bodily Evils and temporal Calamities, whereas this was from ghostly Enemies and everlasting Death, and that by undergoing Death for us. And shall we turn our backs upon a Feast instituted by the Founder of all our Happiness, merely to remember him, and convey to us the Benefits of his Death and Sufferings? *Christ our Passover is sacrific'd for us* (saith the Apostle) *therefore let us keep the Feast*, 1 Cor. 7. 7. which is what our Saviour calls upon us to do in remembrance of him. But how are we to remember him, and the Benefits we receive by him in this Feast ordain'd for that purpose? Why, this is to be done not barely by an historical Remembrance that he lived and died, or having a cold and dead Image of these things in our mind; but by a lively Sense and Impression of them upon our Hearts, and stirring up Affections suited to such a Solemnity: for to remember in Sacred Writ is an Act
not

not of the Mind only, but of the Will and Affections; 'tis one of those hearty words that implies the Motion of all the Powers of the Soul, and influences the whole Man. So that to remember our Saviour in this Sacrament, is to conceive a Hatred to all Sin, which was the Cause of his Sufferings, and to abhor the Practice of so vile a thing: 'Tis to cherish a hearty Love to him, who hath loved us to the Death, and to imitate it by an unfeigned Love to the Brethren, *walking in Love as he also hath loved us.* This is to *keep the Feast, not with the Leaven of Pride*, which is apt to puff up, nor with the *Leaven of Malice and Wickedness*, which sour mens Minds against one another; but with the *unleavened Bread of Sincerity and Truth.* In a word, we are so to remember Christ's Death, as to be deeply affected with the sense of it; to apply to our selves the Merits and Virtue of it, to return our hearty thanks for it, and to express it in the whole course of our Conversation.

To conclude then, This being the great End of our Saviour in this Ordinance, let us not disappoint him in it, either by a careless Neglect or an unworthy receiving of it; but rather let us embrace all Opportunities of honouring and celebrating his Memory. 'Twas our Saviour's last dying Request as well as Command to *do this in Remembrance of me*; and if the last Words of dying Friends are wont to leave a deep Impression, let us not forget this Request of our dying Saviour.

DISCOURSE XI.

Mat. 26. part of the 26th, 27th, 28th Verses; *Jesus took Bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to his Disciples, saying, Take eat, this is my Body: And he took the Cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it, for this is my Blood.*

IT hath been before observ'd that a Sacrament consists of two Parts, *viz.* An outward visible Sign, and an inward spiritual Grace: and having shew'd both these in the Sacrament of Baptism, I come now to shew the same in this of the Lord's Supper; to which we are directed by the next Question in the Catechism, in these words, What

What is the outward Part or Sign in the Lord's Supper? The Answer whereunto is, *Bread and Wine, which the Lord hath commanded to be receiv'd.* Where we have,

1. The outward visible Sign, and that is *Bread and Wine*; and;
2. Our Saviour's Appointment of them in this Sacrament, *which the Lord hath commanded to be receiv'd.* Both these are held forth to us in these words of the Evangelist. *Jesus took Bread, blessed and brake it, and gave it to his Disciples; likewise also he took the Cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them:* There are the outward Sign or Elements of Bread and Wine. *Take eat, this is my Body, and drink ye all of this, this is my Blood:* There is the Lord's Command for the receiving of them. In treating of both these I must observe,

First, The Fitness of these Elements of Bread and Wine to the Purposes for which they were ordain'd.

Secondly, The preparatory Actions of our Saviour about them to render them effectual: And,

Thirdly, The Appointment of them in this Sacrament. For the

First, If it shall be ask'd why Bread and Wine were made choice of by our Saviour before any other Viands? Tho the Word and Will of God, which ought to be our Law, be a sufficient Answer to such Enquiries, and may silence all such nice and curious Questions; yet there were other great and weighty Reasons, that might incline him to these things: As,

1. Because these were us'd before in the Feast of the Passover, of which Christ and his Disciples frequently partook. 'Tis most certain not only from the Holy Scriptures, but many Jewish Writers, that Bread and Wine were a part of the Passover-Supper, which is therefore often stil'd the *Feast of unleavened Bread*. Now our blessed Saviour, who never affected Novelties or Varieties, made no alteration in this matter, but only apply'd those Elements before in use to a higher and better Signification, as we shall see after. He was so far from giving any Encouragement to Innovations, that as he took every Sentence of his Prayer out of the Jewish Forms then in use, so he continu'd the same Provisions of Bread and Wine in his own Supper, that were before us'd in the Feast of the Passover, and only exalted them to a higher Memorial. He took away indeed the Paschal Lamb, which was only a Type of the Sacrifice of himself; who being the Lamb slain to take away the Sins of the World, the other ceas'd of course, and what

what was left in that Feast was consecrated and continued as a Memorial of his own Sufferings.

2. But beside this, the Symbols of Bread and Wine are proper and fit Emblems of this Divine Mystery, and the Benefits convey'd by it; for Bread is the most antient, constant, universal, and necessary Sustainance of Mankind, and Wine the greatest Cordial and Restorative of our feeble Nature; and therefore are both fit Parts of this heavenly Banquet.

We find *Melchizedeck* brought Bread and Wine to *Abraham*, as part of the Blessing bestow'd by that High Priest, and as a Signification of that Sacrament which *Abraham's* Seed was to receive from the High Priest to come after his Order; which with what hath been said of the Passover, shews them to be very antiently us'd in Sacrifice. Again,

3. These things were constantly us'd at Feasts, and never omitted in all Festival Solemnities; and therefore are very fit to represent and attend this Heavenly Feast. Moreover,

These Creatures of Bread and Wine are not only of continual, but universal Use. Bread is the poor man's Food, and is necessary also for the Rich: 'Tis the Staff of Life, and necessary to the Support of all. The Psalmist tells us, that *Bread strengthens man's Heart*, Psal. 104. 5. And elsewhere we read of Wine, *that it cheers the Heart of God and Man*; and therefore they are lively Emblems of the Divine Love, and represent the Sacred Dainties of this spiritual Repast. They both spring from the Earth to mind us of our Original, whence we came, how we subsist, and to what we must return; and thereby teach us to mix Humility with our Praises and Thanksgivings. To all which we may add, that Bread and Wine best answer to those things, to which our blessed Saviour frequently compares himself: We find him often stiling himself, *The Bread of Life*, and *that living Bread that came down from Heaven*, to save the Life of the World, and therefore is fitly represented by that Element, to which he delighted to liken himself. Again, we find him often calling himself a Vine, *I am the Vine, and ye are the Branches*, John 15. 1. shewing how we are ingrafted into him, as Branches into the Stock, and derive all Sap and Nourishment from him. And consequently he is aptly represented by Wine, the Fruit of the Vine, and is fitly remember'd by us in the Blood of the Grape.

In short, there are many other Resemblances in the Nature, Qualities, and Virtue of Bread and Wine, that occasion'd our Saviour's

Saviour's making choice of them as the most proper Food in this Sacrament, being the fittest Signs to set forth his Life and Death, and the best means to communicate to us the Benefits of them. From whence I proceed,

Secondly, To consider the sundry preparatory Actions of our Saviour with respect to this Sacramental Bread and Wine, to render it the more salutary and beneficial to us. And of these our Text mentions four or five, *viz.* his Handling, Blessing, Breaking, Distributing, and Consecrating them; which being particularly mention'd, must be particularly spoken to. And,

1. Our Text tells us, *He took Bread, and likewise after Supper he took the Cup*; which signifies not only his taking them into his Hand, but his lifting them up to be view'd and observ'd by all that were present, the better to stir up their Devotion, and elevate their Hearts unto him. In conformity to this Action, the Priest in the Celebration of this Sacrament is requir'd to take the Bread and Wine into his hand, and to lift them up in the sight of the People, that according to the Prophecy of *Zachary*, *they may look upon him whom they have pierced, and mourn over him*: which made *St. John* say, *That which we have seen with our Eyes, and our Hands have handled of the Word of Life, declare we unto you*. From this Act of Christ's taking the Bread and handling the Cup, and thereby exhibiting both to Mankind, we may meditate on the infinite Goodness and Condescension of our Saviour, in so freely shewing and offering himself unto us. Next to his handling of these Elements follows,

2. His Benediction of them, *He took Bread and blessed it, and likewise took the Cup, and gave thanks*. He would not enter upon the Administration of this Holy Sacrament, till he had blessed the Bread, and blessed God for it. Indeed nothing is to be begun without this Invocation, because nothing can succeed without it: 'tis the Blessing of God that puts all the Virtue and Efficacy into any of his Creatures, and therefore that is to be invoc'd in all our Enterprises: *Every Creature of God is good* (saith the Apostle) *if it be receiv'd with Thanksgiving*; and without that none of his Creatures can yield any Good or Comfort to us. Our daily and common Bread cannot nourish without God's blessing, neither can this Sacred Bread afford any Refreshment without the heavenly Benediction: And this made our Saviour to add his Blessing to these Elements, and sanctify both with Thanksgiving. And because

this is a standing Ordinance in the Church of Christ, he hath im-
power'd and order'd his Ministers to do the same.

3. When he had blessed the Bread, he brake it ; this is the next
Act of our Saviour in this Scene of his Sufferings: where the
breaking of the Bread betokens the breaking of his Body, and
the many Miseries he underwent in it ; the pouring out the Wine
represents the spilling of his Blood, *which was shed for many for
the Remission of Sins.* And as these Actions of our Saviour were
design'd to keep up the Memory of his Passion, so our beholding
of them should call to mind the several Parts and Passages of that
Tragedy ; how he was bruise'd for our Transgressions, buffeted,
spit upon, scourg'd, and at last crucify'd for our Iniquities. And
as Corn must be thresh'd, winnow'd, broken, and ground, before
it becomes Bread to feed us ; so was Christ wounded, bruised, and
exercis'd with Variety of Sufferings, before he became the Bread
of Life to nourish us to eternal Life.

4. Next to the blessing and breaking of the Bread, follows the
Distribution of it, *He gave it to his Disciples.* When Christ took
Bread and blessed it, 'twas not to keep it or engross it to him-
self, but with a bountiful Hand to distribute and give it away ; so
we find him here dealing his Bread to the hungry : And of the
Cup we read likewise, that when he had given thanks, he gave it
to them all, thereby satisfying the thirsty Soul. Because *Man
liveth not by Bread only*, but requireth Drink for his Sustenance,
therefore our merciful High Priest here distributes both, to sup-
ply all our Necessities, and to shew himself an all-sufficient Sa-
viour ; and of all Drinks he made choice of Wine, the fittest to
represent his Blood, and to cherish ours. Thus he filleth those
that hunger and thirst after Righteousness with his good things,
and feedeth their Souls as with Marrow and Fatness, distributing
the Bread of Life to all his Followers, and dealing about the Cup
of Salvation to all that approach his Table : which farther shews
us the infinite Love of Christ, in tendring himself and all his Me-
rits so freely to us.

Lastly, To compleat all, follow the Words of Consecration,
saying of the Bread, *This is my Body which was given for you ;* and
of the Wine, *This is my Blood that was shed for the Remission of
Sins.* By which those Elements cease to be common Bread and
Wine, and are turn'd, the one into the Bread of Life, and the
other into a Potion of Immortality ; and both feed our Souls to
everlasting Life.

But

But this will fall more properly under the next Question of the Catechism, to which I therefore refer it.

Bread and Wine then are the outward Signs and Symbols of this Sacrament. But is it a matter of Indifference whether we take them or no? No, the next words of the Catechism tell us, that *the Lord hath commanded us to receive them*: Which is the

Third Thing propounded, viz. Our Lord's Appointment of these Signs to be receiv'd as the Memorials of himself. This Command is here plainly held forth in the latter part of our Text, where after he had blessed and broken the Bread, he gave it to his Disciples with this Charge, saying, *Take eat, this is my Body*; and of the Cup, when he *had given thanks*, he said, *Drink ye all of this*, &c. Both which amount to an expresse Order of our Saviour to make use of both these consecrated Elements, eating the one, and drinking the other in remembrance of him. He having prescrib'd and presented to us a Remedy for the Diseases of our Souls, wills us to make use of it; *i. e.* when he had prepar'd the Medicine, he here bid us to *take it*; and having fill'd the Cup with a Cordial of his own Heart-blood, gives a Command, *Drink ye all of it*: for as no Medicine can do any good, except it be apply'd, so neither can this heavenly Food be of any use to us, unless it be taken. By receiving of it, we not only pay our Duty and Homage to our Saviour, but receive from him all the Mercy and Merit of his Sufferings. In a word,

By taking in these Elements, we in a manner take Christ into us, becoming one Flesh with him, and being spiritually united to him; for so himself tells us, *He that eateth my Flesh, and drinketh my Blood, abideth in me, and I in him*, John 6. 56.

But how are we to receive these Elements, that they may be effectual to these Ends? This must be known too, because 'tis not all receiving that will be available to these Purposes; for the Apostle speaks of some, who *by their unworthy receiving eat and drink their own Damnation*, 1 Cor. 11. 29. In answer then hereunto I say,

1. We must receive these Sacred Viands with a spiritual Hunger and Thirst, longing for them as the proper Food and Nourishment of our Souls, coming to them with an Appetite, not looking on it as an indifferent thing whether we receive them or no, but led with strong Desires after them, and saying with the Psalmist, *As the Hart panteth after the Water-Brooks, so panteth my Soul after thee*,

thee, O God ! O when shall I come and appear in the Presence of the Lord !

2. We must receive this Divine Food with a due Sense of the infinite Love of God in providing it for us, and bestowing it upon us, that he would give us his Son first to die for us, and after to become our Food in this Sacrament.

3. We must receive it with a Sense of our own Want and Necessity of it ; for 'tis this alone that can feed and nourish us to Eternal Life, and by withholding or neglecting of it, we must starve and perish to all Eternity.

4. We must receive this spiritual Provision with Faith, and a firm Persuasion of receiving benefit by it ; for Christ having appointed Bread and Wine in this Sacrament, as the Sign and Seal of his Covenant, thereby confirming and conveying his Blessings to us, we are to receive them as Pledges of his Love, and build our Hopes upon him.

5. We must receive these things with a holy Reverence and Attention of Mind, not looking on them as common Food, nor going to Christ's Table as to an ordinary Meal ; for this is to profane this Ordinance by not discerning the Lord's Body : but esteeming it a Divine and Heavenly Entertainment, and addressing our selves to it accordingly.

Lastly, We are to receive them with Prayer and Thanksgiving, which alone can bring down a Blessing upon them. This is the best way of digesting this Celestial Food, and turning it into the Substance and Nourishment of our Souls.

In short, We are to receive these Sacred Mysteries with Hearts full of Devotion and Charity, seriously minding the great End and Design of them, and having our Spirits affected with the things represented by them ; that by such lively and lasting Impressions on the Mind, we may be enabled to bring forth Fruits meet for Repentance.

Thus we see the outward visible Sign of this Sacrament, and how we are commanded to receive it : All that is to be added, is to exhort you to a careful and constant Participation of these Holy Mysteries. Let none reject this *Bread of Life that came down from Heaven*, and tends to lead us there ; but rather say with the Apostles, *Lord, evermore give us of this Bread*. Nor let any refuse this Cup of Salvation, mingled with the highest Cordial ; but drink ye all of it, to preserve the Memory of your Saviour, and promote the Health and Welfare of your own Souls.

D I S-

DISCOURSE XII.

Luke 22. part of the 19th and 20th Verses, *This is my Body which is given for you ; This Cup is the New Testament in my Blood, which is shed for you.*

I Treated in my last of the outward Part or Sign of the Lord's Supper, viz. *Bread and Wine*, which the Lord commanded to be receiv'd. I come now, as the Catechism directs, to the inward Part or Thing signify'd : which we are taught to believe is the *Body and Blood of Christ*, which are verily and indeed taken and receiv'd by the Faithful in the Lord's Supper. Of this I shall discourse to you from these words of our Saviour in the Consecration of these Elements, *This is my Body, which was given for you ; and this is my Blood of the New Testament, which was shed for you.* In speaking to which, with relation to the Catechism, I must,

First, Shew in what sense the *Bread and Wine* are here said to be the *Body and Blood of Christ*.

Secondly, How they are said to be taken and receiv'd in this Sacrament, which is verily and indeed. And,

Thirdly, By whom they are so taken and receiv'd ; and that is by the Faithful in the Lord's Supper. For the

First, Great Differences have risen in the Christian Church about the Sense of these words, *This is my Body*, and *this is my Blood* ; that is, whether they are to be understood

Literally, of a Real Change into the very Substance of Christ's natural Body and Blood ; or only

Mystically, of a spiritual Change and Representation of them.

The Church of *Rome*, against all Sense and Reason, contends for the former, and has driven this matter so high, as to define it for an Article of Faith, and to anathematize all that cannot so far renounce their Senses as to believe it ; which hath unhappily forc'd a wide and miserable Breach in the Communion of the Catholick Church. And therefore, for the Satisfaction of well-meaning Christians, I shall observe to you a few things.

1. That as Bread and Wine were us'd in the Feast of the Passover, so was there a Form of words us'd at the Consecration and Delivery of them, which (as the Jewish Writers tell us) was ;

This

This is the Bread of Affliction, which our Fathers did eat; and this is the Body of the Paschal Lamb, which is sacrific'd for you: Which Expressions imply'd no real Change or Alteration in the Substance of the Bread or the Lamb, but were only us'd as Memorials of them. In like manner, our blessed Saviour, in imitation of their Customs, with which he frequently comply'd, us'd the like Form in celebrating his Supper, viz. This is my Body, and this is my Blood, which were given and shed for you: which words import no substantial Change of the Elements, but only that they are the Symbols and Representation of him.

2. *St. Paul, who best knew his Master's Sense, frequently stiles it Bread after the Consecration, calling it only the Communion of the Body of Christ: And the Fathers generally express it by the Symbol, Type, Figure, and Representation of his Body; which they would not do, if there were any such Transmutation of the Substance.*

3. *This Opinion contradicts all our Senses, in a matter whereof they are the proper Judges; for we see and feel and tast it to be Bread and Wine, and not Flesh and Blood. We find our Saviour appealing to the Judgment and Testimony of mens Senses, about the Truth and Reality of his Body, saying to his Disciples, Handle me and see me, for a Spirit hath not Flesh and Bones, as ye see me have; which would be of no force, if our Senses were not to be trusted. Yea, to destroy the Evidence of Sense, is to undermine the whole Christian Religion; for the belief of it depends chiefly upon the Miracles wrought by Christ and his Apostles for the Confirmation of it, of all which we can have no proof, if our Senses are not to be believ'd.*

4. *This monstrous Opinion contradicts all our Reason, as well as Senses; for 'tis contrary to the Nature and Properties of a Body, which being one and circumscrib'd, cannot be in many places at once; for that would make it not one Body, but many. It affirms Christ's Body to be broken, and yet whole and intire; which is to be broken and not broken at the same time. It contradicts the Nature of a Sacrament, where the outward visible Sign must remain to represent the inward spiritual Grace, as Water doth in Baptism. Beside, it makes all Christians Cannibals; yea, it makes Christ eat himself, and devour his own Flesh: And surely he must be a Man of a strange as well as strong Faith, who can swallow such Contradictions. And as this wild Notion contradicts all Sense and Reason, so*

5. It can have no Support from Revelation ; for those words of our Saviour, *This is my Body*, may be no more taken in a literal sense, than those others, *I am a Vine, a Door, a Rock*, and the like, which signify indeed some Resemblance, but imply no Transmutation. Nor,

Lastly, is there any need of such a Transubstantiation of the Elements ; all the Efficacy of Christ's Death being as well, if not better represented and convey'd by a spiritual than a corporal feeding upon him.

It remains then, that we believe, as our Catechism teaches us, that the outward Elements of Bread and Wine are only Signs and Seals of Christ's Body and Blood ; that they are not converted into, but convey to us the Benefits of them ; for which reason they are often stil'd the Symbols, Types and Memorials of them.

But how are the Body and Blood of Christ taken and receiv'd in the Lord's Supper ? That the next words of the Catechism, and our *Second Particular* will inform us, *viz.* That they are *verily and indeed taken* : which words signify Christ to be really, tho not corporally present in this Sacrament.

This is the Doctrine of the Catholick Church in this particular, That Christ's Body and Blood are verily, that is, truly and really, yet spiritually taken in this Supper. They are indeed receiv'd, that is, in Truth and Reality, not in Fancy or Fiction, nor yet in symbolical Representations only, but in Deed and in Truth. Tho the Elements be not turn'd or chang'd into Christ's Substance, but remain still in Substance the same, yet every duly-dispos'd Communicant doth really receive Christ, and truly feed on him in and by those Elements : And as surely as he takes in Bread and Wine, so surely does he take in the Body and Blood of Christ, and thereby become incorporated and united to him. So that there are two Extremes to be carefully avoided by all good Christians in this matter. For first,

Some from the frequent and lively Expressions of Scripture about eating Christ's Body and drinking his Blood, have heighten'd their Minds to too sensible and wrong Conceptions of these holy Mysteries, and strain'd them to a sublime, tho senseless Notion of Transubstantiation.

Others again have debas'd these Elements too low, and thought us'd and them as little better than common Food. The former is an Error proceeding from an Excess of Zeal ; the latter from a Defect, or too great Lukewarmness.

Now

Now our Church teaches us the middle way, which is commonly the Right, between these Extremes, *viz.* not exalting them too high, by converting them into the very Substance of Christ's Body and Blood, nor depressing them too low by denying the Real Presence of both; but affirming Christ to be truly and spiritually present in this Sacrament, and really communicating himself, and the virtue of his Sufferings to us. In this spiritual and mystical Sense, the Body and Blood of Christ are here said to be *verily and indeed taken and receiv'd in the Lord's Supper.*

But by whom are they said to be thus receiv'd? The Answer to this will lead me to consider the Persons by whom they are thus receiv'd: And that we are here told, is *by the Faithful in the Lord's Supper*; 'tis not by all that approach to or handle these Holy Mysteries; for the Apostle tells us of some that receive them unworthily, who instead of reaping any Benefit, become guilty of the Body and Blood of Christ, and eat and drink their own Damnation, not discerning the Lord's Body. 'Tis the Faithful only that feed on Christ in this Sacrament; and as he is verily and indeed taken by them, so does *his Flesh* become to them *Meat indeed, and his Blood Drink indeed.* Christ's Death is indeed offer'd to, and is sufficient for all Men; but 'tis effectual only to true Believers: *To as many as receiv'd him (says St. John) to them gave he Power to become the Sons of God, even to those that believe on his Name,* John 1. 12. And therefore 'twas well said by one of the antient Fathers, The Food of this Sacrament to them that believe, *is the Body and Blood of Christ*; but to them that believe not, 'tis only *Bread and Wine.* So that two things are necessary to the effectual participation of these Mysteries, *viz.* Knowledg to discern the Lord's Body; and Faith to receive and feed upon it as such.

1. Without some competent measure of Knowledg, we shall not discern the Lord's Body, that is, we shall not see what is couch'd under these Sacred Mysteries, nor distinguish this Divine Provision from common Bread; and therefore we must be well instructed in the Nature, End and Use of these Elements, looking upon them as a Spiritual Banquet or Heavenly Entertainment, wherein Christ meets and communicates himself to us, signing and sealing his part of the New Covenant to us; and we on the other hand sign and seal our part and Duty unto him. By this we shall learn to shew forth Christ's Death, and not only
so,

so, but to shew forth the Fruits, and reap the Benefits of it.

And as Knowledg is necessary to help us to discern the Lord's Body, so,

2. Is Faith too to enable us to receive and feed on him accordingly; for without this we shall neither come to it with an Appetite, nor promote its Digestion. 'Tis not sufficient barely to take in and eat those Elements, or to be present as Guests at the Lord's Table; but we must be duly qualify'd, and receive the outward Signs with an inward Faith, and a due Preparation. This is indeed necessary in all the Acts of Religion, but more especially so in this Solemn Duty of Christianity, wherein we come into God's more especial Presence, and are entertain'd by him with the heartiest Welcome, and the best Chear; and therefore should bring with us Dispositions of Soul suitable to such a Solemnity, that is, a sincere Love and a stedfast Faith: for the dearest Pledges of Divine Love will be of no avail to us, if not accompany'd with those Divine Graces, without which tho we may receive the Bread and Wine, yet 'twill neither prove the Bread of Life nor the Cup of Blessing.

Thus we see both the outward Sign, and thing signify'd in this Sacrament, together with the fitness and usefulness of both to the End for which they were ordain'd: for Bread we know is the most common, wholesom, necessary and savory of all Food; and Wine is the most pleasant, cordial and reviving of all Liquors, and therefore the fittest to represent the Heavenly Provision of Christ's Table.

Again, we have seen what is held forth and convey'd by these things, viz. the Body and Blood of Christ, together with the manner how they become so to the worthy Receivers; namely, not by any real change of the Nature or Substance of those Elements, but only in their Significancy, Use, and Divine Efficacy.

Lastly, We have seen likewise the Persons to whom these Benefits belong, which are only the *Faithful, in the Lord's Supper*; that is, such as firmly believe and apply to themselves the Virtue of Christ's Sufferings.

I shall shut up this with a word or two of Application.

1. Not to neglect the outward visible Signs: Nor,
2. To forget the inward Spiritual Grace represented by them; but to retain a due Reverence and Observance of both.

For the First, There are but too many who live in a gross neglect of this Holy Institution: Some thro Carelesness and In-

advertence, having no fear of God before their Eyes; others thro too much Timorousness and Superstition, fearing where no Fear is: both which, instead of drawing nigh to, turn their backs upon Christ's Table, refusing to tast of his Supper, and casting from them the Bread of Life. We read in the Gospel of those that were invited to the *Marriage Feast* of the King's Son, that many of them *made light of it, and went their way, one to his Farm, and another to his Merchandize*: Some absolutely refus'd to come, others made slight and frivolous Excuses; but with both of them the King was wroth, and instead of sending other Messengers to invite them, sent only his Army to destroy them. Such and much worse will be the End of those that make light of Christ, and thrust Salvation from them.

In a word, We may all learn from hence, not to neglect these Sacred Mysteries, nor to rest in a careless and unworthy receiving of them; but to keep up a becoming Regard and Observance of the outward Signs, and a due Veneration of the things signify'd by them.

DISCOURSE XIII.

Phil. 4. 13. *I can do all things thro Christ that strengthneth me.*

HAVING explain'd the Nature, End and Design of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, together with the outward Signs us'd in it, and the inward Grace signify'd by it: I proceed (as the Catechism directs) to consider some of the many and great Benefits and Advantages of this Sacrament, which are here mention'd as an Inducement to the frequent use and participation of it. This the next Question and Answer will give us some account of; where 'tis ask'd,

What are the Benefits whereof we are made Partakers thereby?

To which the Answer is,

The strengthening and refreshing of our Souls by the Body and Blood of Christ, as our Bodies are by the Bread and Wine. Of this I shall treat from the words read, *I can do all things thro Christ which strengthens me.* They are the words of St. Paul, who elsewhere tells us, That he could do nothing, not so much as think a good

†

Thought,

Thought, and much less perform a good Action: and yet here he tells us, *that he can do all things*, nothing is too hard or impossible to him. How are these things to be reconcil'd? Why, very well: He could *do nothing of himself*, or by his own Power and Strength, which is no better than Weakness; but he *could do all things*, by the help of the Divine Power, or *thro Christ that strengthen'd him*. In discoursing of which words, with respect to the Catechism, I must inquire,

First, What is that Strength or Refreshment which our Souls are here said to partake of?

Secondly, From whence we receive it? which the Text tells us is *thro Christ*: The Catechism to the same effect, from the *Body and Blood of Christ*.

Thirdly, How our Souls are strengthen'd by them? *viz.* as our Bodies are by the Bread and Wine.

For the *First*; The Strength and Refreshment which our Souls are capable of, consist chiefly in these three things.

1. A Power of resisting Sin, and vanquishing the Temptations to it.

2. In an Ability of doing the Will of God, in a way acceptable and well-pleasing to him.

3. In a delight in the sense of the Love and Favour of God, or being reconcil'd to him. These are the main, if not the only Things that can fortify the Mind, or bring any ease or refreshment to it; and therefore must be briefly consider'd. And,

1. I say, The strength of the Soul consists mightily in resisting Sin, and overcoming the Temptations to it. Tho Sin be the Bane and Poison of the Soul, yet too many are easily persuaded to take it; yea, so besotted are they with the love of this great Evil, as to be both unable and unwilling to resist it. The first Sin brought a feebleness and corruption upon all our Faculties, which by an habitual Course of actual Transgressions, become much impair'd. This is the weakness of the Mind, which is hereby render'd a Slave to Sin, and a Vassal to vile Affections: Sin reigns in their mortal Bodies, and makes them obey it in the Lusts thereof; yea, it rules and domineers in the Soul, and carries it captive with every Temptation. Now the Strength of the Soul lies in subduing these sinful Lusts, and getting the mastery of all inordinate Desires and Affections: this is what *St. Paul* pray'd for in the behalf of the *Colossians*, that God would *strengthen them*

with Might in the inward Man: And St. Peter in the behalf of all Christians, that *the God of all Grace would make them perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle them*, 1 Pet. 5. 10. meaning, that they might be not only establish'd in the Truth, but fortify'd against all their Enemies, becoming strong in the Lord, striving against Sin.

2. The Strength of the Soul consists not only in a Power of resisting Sin, but likewise in an ability of doing our Duty, and performing the Will of God in a way well-pleasing to him. 'Tis true indeed, we cannot hope to come up exactly to our Duty, or to perform the whole Law, or Will of God; no, there is no Perfection in this Life, and *in many things we offend all*: But yet we may and ought to come as near it as we can, to do our utmost, and to yield a hearty and sincere Obedience, bewailing our past Failings, and watching against future Miscarriages. This is what God hath promis'd to accept of, and willed all Christians to pray and labor for, *giving all diligence to make their Calling and Election sure, and to work out their Salvation with fear and trembling*: They that do so, are said to be *strong in the Lord, and in the Power of his Might*, and to acquit themselves as the faithful Servants and Soldiers of Jesus Christ.

3. The strengthening and refreshing of our Souls implies farther, a Complacency or Delight in God, arising from the Sense of his Love, or being reconcil'd to him: This is indeed the greatest ease and refreshment of our rational and immortal Soul, which nothing here below is able to please or satisfy; 'tis of a nobler Nature and Descent, than to feed upon Husks, or entertain it self with any earthly or sensual Satisfaction. Nothing but God and the things Above are a suitable Portion for it, or can afford any agreeable pleasure to it: The Language of the Heaven-born Soul is like that of David, *Whom have I in Heaven but thee? and there is none upon Earth that I desire in comparison of thee. My Flesh and my Heart faileth; but God is the Strength of my Heart, and my Portion for ever*, Psal. 73. 25, 26. His Favour is better than Life, and the Light of his Countenance puts more gladness into the Heart, than the largest increase of Corn, Wine and Oil. When he hideth his Face we are troubled; and as the sense of Guilt sinks the Soul into Sorrow and Despair, so the sense of Pardon and Reconciliation with its Maker, raiseth it into Raptures of Joy and Rejoicing.

The strengthening then and refreshing the Soul, imply a Power over Sin, an Ability of serving God, and an Interest in his Love and Favour: These are the proper good Things which the Soul stands in need of, and which it most of all desires.

But, *Secondly*, whence hath the Soul this spiritual Strength and Refreshment? Why, our Text tells us 'tis *thro Christ*; the Catechism more particularly, from *the Body and Blood of Christ*. St. Paul declares, that he could *do all things thro Christ that strengthen'd him*: Meaning, as he elsewhere explains himself, that the Grace of God was sufficient for him, and help'd him to overcome all Difficulties; insomuch that when he seem'd to be most weak, then was he *strongest*, and his Strength was made perfect in Weakness: by this he was enabled to subdue Sin, to vanquish Satan, to overcome the World, and to *be more than Conqueror over all these, thro Christ that loved him*. Hence we find him triumphing over *Principalities and Powers, over the Rulers of the Darkness of this World, and over spiritual Wickednesses in high Places*. Yea, we find him triumphing over Death and the Grave, defying the Sting of one and the Strength of the other, and thanking God for the Victory obtain'd over them, *thro our Lord Jesus Christ*, 1 Cor. 15. 53. And he that can do this, may do all things by such a Divine Power that strengthens him. Sin indeed weakens the Soul, by alienating it from God, where all its Strength lies, and depriving it of the Assistance of his Grace, which is alone able to help it. *How weak is thine Heart* (says God) *seeing thou hast done these things?* Ezek. 16. 30. So that 'tis the Grace of God that strengthens and refresheth the Soul; and as we may be enabled to do all things with it, so without it we can do nothing: this our Saviour told his Disciples, *John 15. 5. I am the Vine* (says he) *and ye are the Branches; he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much Fruit; but without me ye can do nothing*. As the Branches live in the Vine, and bring forth Fruit by the Sap they derive from it; so the Life that we live, is by the Faith of the Son of God; and 'tis by his Grace alone communicated to us, that we are enabled to bring forth any Fruit: and therefore Christ in compassion to our Infirmities, calls all that labour under the Burden of Sin, and groan with the sense of their own Weakness, to come to him for ease, and they shall find rest to their Souls, *Mat. 11.*

Now,

Now, *Thirdly*, this Spiritual Strength and Refreshment is (as the Holy Scriptures and the Catechism teach) deriv'd to us by the Body and Blood of Christ, which is that Divine Food that nourishes and cherisheth to Eternal Life; by these he feeds the Hungry, and satisfies the Thirsty Soul; he heals the Wounded, pardons the Sinner, comforts the Weak, and strengthens him against all his Enemies. A devout Father hath given us an Account of the delicious Dainties prepar'd and set forth to us in this Supper of our Lord, in which he makes mention of Provisions, not only solid and strengthning, but sweet and refreshing, and likewise medicinal and healing to all the Diseases of the Soul; and by these things invites all Christians, and provokes their Appetite to this Heavenly Chear.

First then, the Divine Food tender'd to us at the Lord's Table, serves to the *strengthening of the Soul*: And this it does, partly by quickning and assisting all its Faculties, and partly by exercising and improving all its Graces.

As for the Faculties of the Soul, they are mightily rais'd and elevated by this Heavenly Chear: the Understanding becomes more full and clear in all its Perceptions; the Will more free in its Operations and Tendency to Good; the Affections more lively and vigorous in all their motions towards it. In a word, the whole Soul is hereby made more active, and inclin'd to the Choice and Love of the best things.

As for the Graces of the Soul, and particularly those three eminent ones of *Faith, Hope, and Charity*; these are mightily improv'd and augmented by this Gospel Feast.

Faith is increas'd in it by the help of our Senses, for in this Holy Sacrament we see, and feel, and tast, that the Lord is Gracious; we behold the Wounds of a Crucified Saviour, and in a manner thrust our Hands into his Side, which is enough to banish all our Doubts, and make us no longer *faithless, but believing*; this must make our Faith, like that of St. Thomas, more lively and strong, and to cry out with him, *My Lord and my God*.

And as our Faith is confirm'd by this Holy Communion, so is our Hope too in proportion to it: this depends on and increases with that, for when we firmly believe the Truth of the Gospel, and the Things deliver'd in it, we shall patiently wait for the accomplishment of them, and comfortably expect the fulfilling of all the Promises. A Christian's Hope is nourish'd by his

his Faith; which being the Evidence of things not seen, sets him a longing and looking for them: this is *an Anchor of the Soul, both sure and stedfast*, that keeps it from wavering and warping from its Duty.

But above all, The excellent Grace of Charity is very much strengthen'd and increas'd by this Sacrament, and that in both its Branches, the Love of God and our Neighbour; for the lively Representation we there have of the Divine Love, must inkindle in our Breast the Love of both: *The Love of Christ constraineth us* (says the Apostle) there are those Cords or Charms in Love that strongly draw and invite the Affections; neither doth any thing more inflame our Hearts, than the burning of another's towards us: This adds still new Fuel to the Fire, and keeps up a constant Flame of Love burning in our Souls towards God; and likewise knits us in the firm Bonds of Love and Affection to all our Brethren; who are all Members of Christ's Body, and for whom he was pleas'd to shed his own Blood: And if we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his Love is perfected in us, 1 John 4. 12.

2. The Body and Blood of Christ given to us in this Sacrament, serve not only to the *strengthening*, but *refreshing our Souls*: for this is a Marriage-Feast, or a Feast of Love, which above all things cheers the Heart, and is accompany'd with the greatest Joy: The Body of Christ yields a more pure and permanent nourishment than any bodily Sustenance can afford; and his Blood is more cordial and reviving than the Blood of the richest Grape, which made the Spouse in the *Canticles* declare, that *his Love was better than Wine*, Cant. 1. 2. What can more ravish and transport the Soul, than to feast not only with, but upon the Son of God, and in a secret, spiritual, and wonderful manner become united to him? Which made the Church in the *Canticles* farther say, *We will be glad and rejoice in thee; we will remember thy Love more than Wine*, Cant. 1. 4.

Lastly, The Divine Provision of this Feast, is not only strengthening and refreshing, but healing and medicinal to all the Diseases of the Soul; 'tis Physick as well as Food, and at once both feeds and heals. Christ's Flesh was given as a Sacrifice for us, and so is healing to our Souls, and killing to our Sins: His Blood was shed as an Expiation, and thereby at once purifies the Heart, and purges it from all Iniquity: So the Apostle tells us, *His Blood cleanseth from all Sin*, 1 John 1. 7. Hence we find our Saviour

Saviour affirming, his *Flesh to be Meat indeed, and his Blood to be Drink indeed*, John 6. And justly too, since they answer all the Desires, cure all the Diseases, and serve all the Necessities of the Soul, and so are both Meat and Medicine too.

But how are our *Souls thus strengthen'd and refresh'd by the Body and Blood of Christ*? Why, that our Catechism tells us is, *as our Bodies are by Bread and Wine*; that is, by duly receiving and digesting of them: for as the wholesomest Food cannot nourish, unless taken in; nor the best Physick do any good unless apply'd, so neither can the Body and Blood Christ be of any use or benefit to us, except they are worthily receiv'd and digested by us. Bread we know is the Staff of our natural Life, and Wine serves to chear and revive the Spirits: In like manner the Body of Christ is the Stay and Support of our Spiritual Life, and his Blood cherishes to Life Eternal, and both by being duly receiv'd and apply'd to us.

Let none then neglect this Sacred Ordinance, nor slight the Heavenly Chear tender'd in it, which tends so much to the Health, Comfort and Happiness of our Souls. Beware of turning your backs upon the Holy Table, where these exquisite Dainties are serv'd up and offer'd to us, for that is to *trample under foot the Son of God, and count the Blood of the Covenant by which we are sanctified, an unholy thing*; which is not only a great Indignity to our Saviour, but a vast Injury to our own selves: for since there is *no other Sacrifice for Sin, How shall we escape if we neglect so great Salvation*? But rather let us hunger and thirst after this Sacred Food, being ever ready to *do this*, as in remembrance of our Saviour, so for the Relief of our own Souls.

DISCOURSE XIV.

1 COR. II. 28. *Let a Man examine himself, and so let him eat of that Bread, and drink of that Cup.*

I Shew'd in my last, some of the many and great Benefits that accrue from the worthy Receiving of the Lord's Supper, which are enough to quicken our Appetite, and help our Digestion of that Celestial Food. But because something is requir'd on our part to be made partakers of them, I come now, as the
last

last Question in the Catechism directs, to inquire, *What is requir'd of them that come to the Lord's Supper?*

To which the Answer is, *To examine themselves whether they repent them truly of their former Sins, stedfastly purposing to lead a new Life, to have a lively Faith in God's Mercy thro Christ, with a thankful Remembrance of his Death, and be in Charity with all Men.* Of this I shall treat at this time from those words of the Apostle, *Let a Man examine himself, and so let him eat, &c.* Where I must speak,

First, Of the Act or Duty of Self-Examination, Let a Man, &c.

Secondly, Of the Matter of this Examination, and that is about the Truth of his Repentance, whether he repent him truly, &c.

Thirdly, Of the manner or Qualifications that must attend it: And they are,

(1.) With stedfast Purposes of a new Life. (2.) With a lively Faith in God's Mercy thro Christ. (3.) With a thankful Remembrance of his Death. And (4.) with an Universal Love, or being in Charity with all Men. Of each of which something briefly and particularly.

And *First, Of the Act or Duty of Self-Examination, Let a Man examine himself, &c.* The word *δοκιμάζειν*, to examine, hath in the Scripture a double signification, viz. to prove, and to approve: in the former sense, it signifies a Search or Trial of any Person or Thing; so 'tis us'd 1 *Theff.* 5. 21. *πάντα δοκιμάζετε, prove, or try all things*: in the latter it signifies the Acquittal or Approbation after trial; so 'tis us'd *Rom.* 2. 18. *δοκιμάζεις τὰ διαφέροντα, thou approvest the things that are excellent.* In both these senses we are here requir'd to examine our selves, that is, we are first to make full proof, search and trial of our own Souls, to know their State, and in what Condition they stand before God; and then indeavour to bring the trial to a good issue, that our Conscience may approve, acquit and pass Sentence for us: both these are imply'd in those words of the Apostle, *Examine your selves whether you be in the Faith, prove or approve your selves,* 1 *Cor.* 13. 5. that is, seek so to know your State, that you may pass a Judgment on your selves to be what you profess or pretend to. So that Self-Examination may be describ'd to be

an Act of the Soul, whereby it reflects upon its past Actions, and thorowly scans the whole Course of its Life. I stile it,

1. *An Act of the Soul*, because to think and consider are peculiar only to rational and immaterial Beings.

2. I stile it an Act of the Soul, *whereby it reflects upon its former Actions*, to distinguish it from those direct Acts of the Soul, which only look forward; whereas Self-examination looks backward, and calls to account the things that are past. And therefore 'tis added,

Lastly, That it thorowly scans the whole Course of our Lives, making a close Search and Scrutiny into all that we have done, and taking a strict Survey of the whole state of our Soul: 'Tis as it were erecting a Court of Judicature, or keeping an Assize in our own Breast, where Conscience is both the Accuser, Witness, and Judge, to arraign, acquit, or condemn us, according to the Rule of God's Law, either by the Light of Nature, or Scripture, reveal'd to us.

To examine our selves then, is to call our selves to an account, to review all our past Actions, and to look into the State and Condition of our Souls; which, however irksom and grievous it may be, like the recounting of Debts, or raking into old Sores, is yet absolutely necessary to the Health and Welfare of our Souls.

And as this is frequently to be done to quit old Scores, and to prevent running behind-hand in our spiritual State, so is it more seriously and strictly to be done when we approach the Holy Table, where we must never come without our Wedding Garment, that is, well-dress'd and prepar'd Souls, adorn'd with Grace fit to meet and feast with our Saviour, and leaving all our Sins behind us. And this will lead us from the Nature, to consider,

Secondly, The Matter of Self-examination, and that is about the Truth of our Repentance, or as the Catechism expresses it, *Whether we repent us truly of our former Sins*. Now Repentance being a *turning from Sin unto God*, we are to examine what progress we have made in this Course, that is, how far we are advanc'd in forsaking the one, and following the other. For our forsaking of Sin, we are to examine,

1. Whether it be from the Love and Liking of it; for if it be only from the Practice of it, with a reserve of Kindness for it, as occasion and opportunity offers, this turning from Sin is founded
upon

upon a very unsafe and uncertain bottom. Men may and often do abstain from some Vices for fear of Shame and Punishment, not from the Love of Good or the Hatred of Evil: This therefore is to be enquir'd into, whether our turning from Sin proceed from a right Principle. If it proceed from a Sense of the natural Perversity and Deformity of it, of its Opposition to the Divine Nature and Will, its Offensiveness to God, and Destructiveness to our own Souls, this Aversion is well-grounded. Otherwise, if we cease from Sin only for want of Ability or Opportunity of committing it, we may not so properly be said to leave Sin, as Sin is said to leave us.

2. We must examine whether our turning from Sin be total or universal, that is, whether we turn from all Sin: for true Repentance lays the Axe to the Root, and cuts down the whole Body of Sin; it will not spare an *Agag*, or retain a kindness for any one darling Vice, but sets us against all Iniquity, and especially against the Sin that doth so easily beset us. Indeed, where we turn from Sin from the true Principle of Obedience, namely the Will of God, there we shall turn from all Sin, being all contrary to his Nature and Will: And if we thus hate every false way, and abandon all, even the most beloved Vices, then is our Repentance sound and sincere; otherwise, if we are unwilling to part with all, but reserve a secret liking to any one, if we cease from some Sins only to cleave the closer to others, we have not yet truly repented, but love our Sins better than our Saviour, and so are not qualify'd to feast with him here, or enjoy him hereafter.

3. We must examine not only the Truth, but the Steadiness and Constancy of our Repentance; that is, whether we so turn from Sin, as to return to it no more. True Repentance bids a final Adieu to all sinful Courses, and wills us not to return again to Folly: if we thus do, we shall be worthy and welcome Guests at Christ's Table; otherwise, if we return with the Dog to his Vomit, or the Sow that was wash'd to her wallowing in the Mire, we are fitter to feed with Swine than our Saviour, and Husks are more proper for us than these heavenly Dainties.

As for that other Branch of Repentance, which consists in turning unto God, we must examine the Truth and Sincerity of that too, and not cease the Enquiry till we have found how we stand affected towards him: If we cleave unto God with full purpose of Heart, preferring him in our Choice and Affections above all

things ; if we love him with all our heart, and with all our mind, and with all our strength, and count all things but Dross and Dung in comparison of the Excellence of the Knowledge of Christ ; then are we qualify'd for this Heavenly Feast, and may be meet Partakers of these Holy Mysteries.

But *Thirdly*, If upon Examination we find (as the best of us will) that all things are not so right with us as they should be, but that we have broken the Laws of God in Thought, Word, and Deed, omitting many things requir'd of us, and committing what is forbidden ; we are to add,

1. Our *stedfast Purposes and Resolutions of leading a new Life* : for so the Examination mention'd in our Text and Catechism require from us. The great Design of this Sacrament is to renew our Covenant with God, which we have many times and many ways broken, and to tie our baptismal Vow the more close upon us ; for tho at our entrance upon Christianity we solemnly engag'd to be Christ's faithful Soldiers and Servants to our lives end, yet the best of us have frequently started aside from him, and violated those Engagements. Now tho we are all concern'd daily to call our selves to an account, to review our Actions, to bewail our manifold Transgressions, and to devote our selves afresh to his Service ; yet this is more especially to be done before we come to the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, when we are more strictly to examine our selves, to humble our selves for our past Miscarriages, and to renew our Vows and Resolutions of living better. And that these Vows and Resolutions may be the more firm and lasting, we are,

(1.) To enter upon them on serious and mature Deliberation : 'tis not enough to resolve in general to amend, but we must more particularly weigh the sundry Parts and Passages of a religious Life ; what we must part with, what we must do, and what we may suffer in adhering to it : without this our good Purposes will not hold on, but be shock'd and vanquish'd by every Temptation. Sudden and rash Vows are soon forgot ; and he that resolves in haste, will repent by leisure. The unwise Builder in the Gospel, that did not set down and consider what his intended Work would cost, was forc'd to leave off in the middle, and was upbraided with that stinging Reflection ; *This Man began to build, but was not able to finish.* In like manner, he that does not duly weigh what Christianity will cost him, will be but half a Chris-

tian, and never bring his good Purposes or Designs to any Perfection: And therefore we must thorowly consider what we resolve upon, that it may have the full Approbation of our Mind, the free Consent of our Will, and may move with the whole Stream and Current of our Affections: Then will nothing be able to stagger it, nor shall we ever repent the Wisdom of our Choice.

(2.) That our good Purposes may be stedfast, and hold out against all Temptation, they must be taken up upon good grounds. A Tree that is not well rooted is liable to be shaken and blown down with every Wind; and a Resolution badly founded is of no long continuance. He that resolves to amend, only to please a Friend, to avoid Shame or Punishment, and to promote any secular Design, will easily change his mind when the Tide turns; and if he can commit his Sin with secrecy and safety, will soon return to his former Courses: And therefore our good Purposes must have a better bottom; they must be founded on the Love of Vertue and the Hatred of Vice, with a Sense of the Excellence of the one, and the Baseness of the other; they must proceed from a Sense of our Duty to God, and a due Care of our own Soul: These things will fix and rivet them in our Minds, and not suffer us to waver or shrink from them.

(3.) That our Vows and Purposes may be the more effectual, they must be attended with a diligent Use of all good means that may enable or encourage us to perform them; for without this they will be all unsuccessful and abortive. 'Tis not sufficient that we have brought our Minds to some good Resolutions, and rest there without any farther Care; we may not think this a Charm strong enough of it self to drive away Sin or Satan from us: no, we must apply our selves to the use of all good means prescrib'd to that end, that is, we must *strive against Sin* in all its motions and occasions, and *resist the Devil*, before he will flee from us. 'Tis a vain Surmise of some to think, if they do but resolve and intend to mend their Lives, they may satisfy themselves in that, and leave the rest to God Almighty, who will in a supernatural way infuse his Grace into them: This is a corrupt Suggestion of a deceitful Heart; for the Spirit of God works not now in any extraordinary manner, but seconds our Endeavours, and assists us in the use of all good means; and we may as well hope to be rich or learned without taking the course for them, as to be holy and vertuous without using the means appointed to that end.

Lastly,

Lastly, That our good Purposes may fit us for the worthy receiving the Lord's Supper, they must be attended with Prayer, and a devout imploring the Assistance of Heaven, to enable us to keep them; for without this, we *can do nothing*, and with it we may be able to *do all things*. 'Twill be in vain to make solemn Vows and Promises of Amendment, without the Aid of God's Holy Spirit to help us to perform them; 'tis this that gives all the Strength and Success to them, and this is only to be had by diligent Prayer: which should make us ever mindful of prostrating our selves at the Throne of Grace, to obtain Strength to mortify our Sins and to fortify our Grace, and to find help in time of need, especially when we approach this Ordinance: knowing (as one has well observ'd) that he that is not frequently on his knees before he comes to the holy Table, kneels to very little purpose when there.

2. Our Self-examination must be accompanied with a *lively Faith in God's Mercy thro Christ*; that is, with a full Persuasion of God's Goodness, and his Readiness to impart to us the Virtue and Merits of Christ's Death for our Salvation. This is indeed necessary in all other Acts of Religion; for *he that cometh unto God must believe that he is, and that he is a Rewarder of all them that diligently seek him*. But 'tis more than ordinarily so in this solemn and venerable Part of Divine Worship, wherein we prepare our selves to meet our Saviour, and to receive from him all the Benefits and Blessings which he hath purchas'd for us: Here we are to stir up and exercise the highest Acts of Faith, to draw nigh with full assurance of finding Mercy, and our Faith must be not only active, but lively. And if we consider things aright, we shall find abundant reason so to do; for Christ hath not only invited all penitent Sinners to come to him, but hath promis'd them a hearty Welcome: Let them be never so heavy laden with the weight of their Sins, if they are but sensible of the burden, and desirous of ease, they are assur'd of finding Rest unto their Souls: yea, let the Aggravations of their Sins be never so many and great, *tho they are as Scarlet, they shall be as Wool; tho they are red as Crimson, yet by the Tears of godly Sorrow, they shall become whiter than Snow*. Now *he is faithful that hath promis'd*, and may be safely rely'd upon: His infinite Power and Goodness being firm Props and Pillars of our Faith, and his Truth and Faithfulness may add Life and Strength to it; so that if we renew our Vows and Purposes of a Holy Life, we may come with boldness to this Holy Table, bringing with us a *lively Faith in God's Mercy thro*

thro Christ, that is, thro his Merits and Mediation, which alone intitle us to it.

3. This Self-examination must be attended with a thankful Remembrance of Christ's Death: This we have seen to be the great End of this Gospel-Feast, to commemorate the Death of Christ with Thanksgiving, to recount what he hath done and suffer'd for our Redemption, and to keep up the Sense and Memory of his Goodness: And certainly if any Mercy deserves Thanks, or is worthy to be remember'd, this which Christ hath done ought to fill our Hearts with Joy, and our Mouths with the Praises of our Redeemer. To forget the Kindness of a dear Friend is a great piece of Baseness, and to neglect the Tokens by which he desir'd to be remember'd, adds to the Unworthiness: But to forget the unparallel'd Love of our Saviour, and to omit the Memorials of his Kindness, is the very height of Ingratitude. To rescue any from Captivity and Bondage will leave deep Impressions of Thankfulness upon all ingenuous Natures; but to rescue another from Death by dying for him, is a Mercy never to be forgotten: both these have been in the highest measure done for us by our blessed Saviour, who hath ransom'd us from the vilest Bondage to the worst of Enemies, at the price of his own Blood, and by his Death hath deliver'd us from the pains of eternal Death. And what Gratitude can be great enough for such inestimable Favors? How can we let slip the Remembrance of such inexpressible Kindness? How can we think of it without Hearts inflam'd with Love and Gratitude? And much less may we celebrate the Memorials of it without Raptures of Joy and Thankfulness!

Lastly, Our Self-examination must be follow'd with an universal Love to Mankind, and being in Charity with all Men. To this Christ directs in all Acts of Religious Worship, *Mat. 5.23, 24. If thou bring thy Gift to the Altar, and there rememberest thy Brother hath ought against thee, leave there thy Gift before the Altar, and go thy way, first be reconcil'd to thy Brother, and then come and offer thy Gift.*

But this must be most carefully done, when we approach the Altar in this Sacred Ordinance, where we remember the greatest Love that was ever shew'd to the Sons of Men; which we cannot better commemorate than with Hearts full of Love to the Brethren. There we behold and receive the Pledges of our Peace and Reconciliation with God, and therefore must come to it in perfect Peace and Reconciliation with one another. The Lord's Supper is a Feast of Love, design'd to unite us to Christ as the Head,

Head, and to each other as the Members. Eating and Drinking together at the same Table, is a means to signify and create Love, and serve to fasten Men together in the firmest Leagues of Friendship; but the Bread we eat at Christ's Table should be the strongest Bond of Love and Unity, and the Cup we there drink of should be a Cup of Charity. The Jews were commanded to eat the Passover *with unleavened Bread*, that nothing might swell or sour their minds; and the Apostle alluding to it, wills us to keep this Gospel Feast *not with the Leaven of Malice and Wickedness, but with the unleavened Bread of Sincerity and Truth*: signifying, that we must empty our Hearts of all Malice, Envy, Hatred, and the like, before we approach the Holy Table, and must take care that we come to it in perfect Peace and Charity with all Men.

Thus having seen the Duty of Self-examination, together with those Qualifications that must attend it: I shall conclude with the

Last words of our Text, *And so let him eat of that Bread, and drink of that Cup*: which words signify not a bare Permission only, or a Liberty of letting these things alone, but an Injunction rather, first to examine our selves, and then to partake of these Holy Mysteries.

We may not look upon this as a Matter of Indifference, whether we do it or no, but as an indispensable Duty, which the Command of our Saviour, and the Necessities of our Souls require from us. Some Men are sufficiently aware of the Danger of coming unworthily, but have little or no Sense at all of the Danger of not coming at all; yea, too many think themselves safe, if they meddle not with these Sacred Mysteries: as if all the Evil lay in the ill performance, and there were no danger in the Neglect of them. These Mens Consciences are but half inform'd; they see the Evil of one side, but are blind on the other: whereas if they will but open their eyes, they may easily see the Danger to be very great on both. To eat and drink unworthily, is to profane the Lord's Body; not to eat it, is to despise and contemn it: He that does the former, eats and drinks his own Damnation; he that allows himself in the latter, commits a damnable Sin: The one is as taking of Poison, the other is as certain Famine or Death. And therefore to prevent both these Evils, let us prepare our selves by a strict Examination of our ways, and then draw nigh to that holy Table, where if we remember our Saviour now, we shall be remember'd by him hereafter; and by feeding on him by Faith here, shall feast with him forever in his Heavenly Kingdom.

